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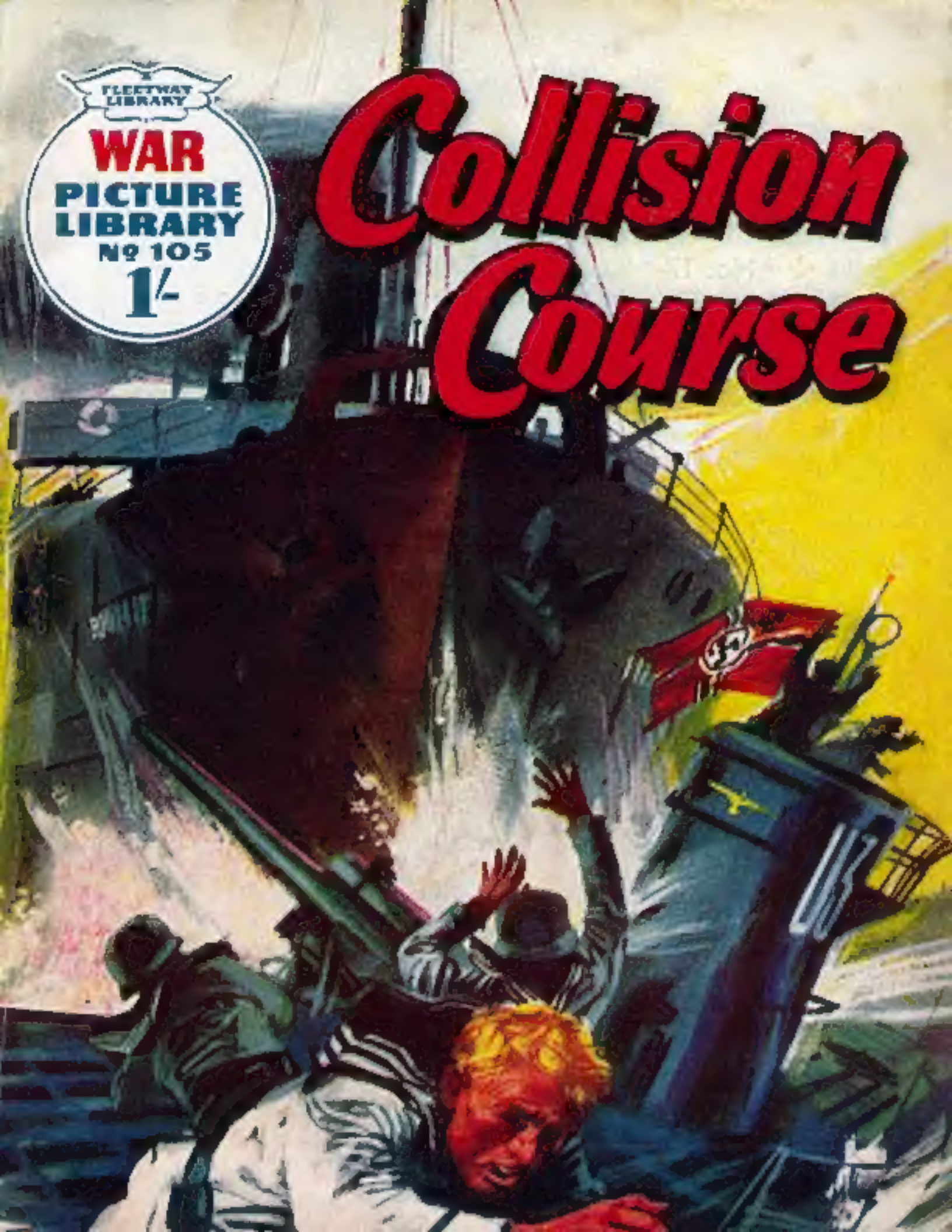

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Collision Course

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Chapter 1. FIGHTING MERCHANTMAN

THE FIGHT HAD BEEN IN PROGRESS FOR ALL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES AND THE CREWS OF BOTH THE DOMINIC AND THE CONWAY STAR WERE HOARSE FROM CHEERING ON THEIR RESPECTIVE SKIPPERS....
BELT HIM, SKIPPER! KNOCK HIM OFF THAT PEG LEG OF HIS!
YOU HOLD YOUR TONGUE, SHRIMP— OR I'LL FLATTEN YOU!
WHY, YOU YOUNG PUPPY! I'LL ...!

FOR A MOMENT, IT LOOKED AS IF THE FIGHT WAS ABOUT TO SPREAD, BUT A STATE POLICE CAR SCREECHED ON TO THE SCENE, ITS SIREN WAILING. ITS OCCUPANTS HAULED THE BRAWLING SHIPS' CAPTAINS APART.
LET ME GET AT HIM! I'LL TEAR EVERY LIMB FROM HIS BODY!
YOU FAT PIRATE! YOU COULDN'T TEAR A PAGE FROM A SHIP'S LOG!

STILL PROTESTING FURIOUSLY, THE TWO IRISH SKIPPERS WERE BROUGHT BEFORE CAPTAIN HERNANDEZ, THE LOCAL CHIEF OF POLICE.

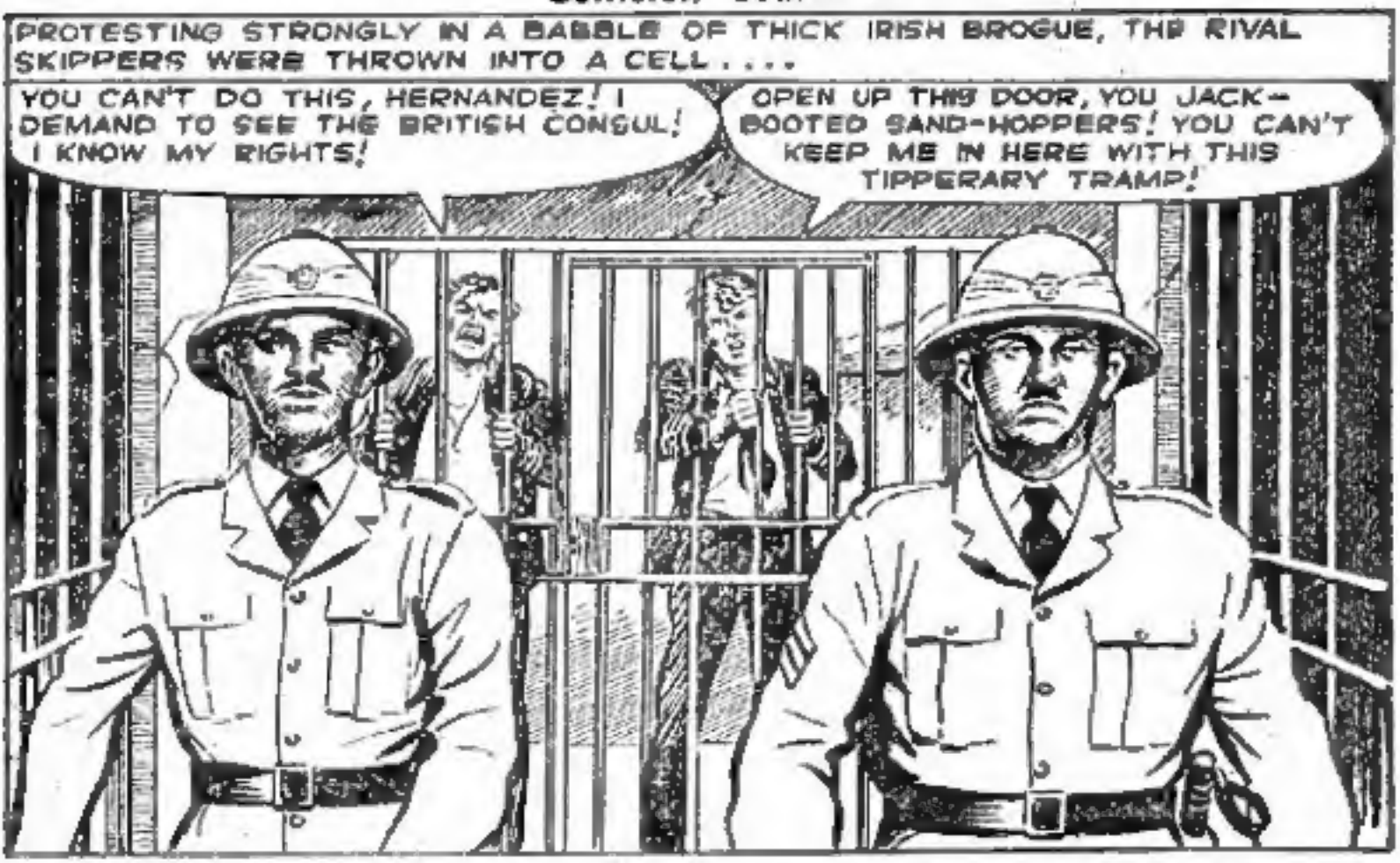
I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD BE YOU TWO! BRAWLING LIKE DRUNKEN SEAMEN IN A DOWN-TOWN BAR-ROOM! WHO WOULD THINK TO LOOK AT YOU THAT YOU WERE THE MASTERS OF BRITISH MERCHANT SHIPS?

LISTEN, HERNANDEZ, YOU KEEP YOUR OPINIONS TO YOURSELF! ME AND MY CREW WERE GROSSLY INSULTED BY THIS SON-OF-A-SEA-COOK!

YOU'RE A DIRTY LIAR, CAREY!

INCENSED BY CARRY'S ACCUSATION, CONNOR STRUGGLED TO GET FREE AND RENEW THE FIGHT.....

STOP! WHY, OH, WHY, CAN'T YOU TWO ROGUES STAY AWAY FROM THIS PORT? YOU BRING ME NOTHING BUT TROUBLE EVERY TIME YOU PUT IN HERE! THERE IS A LIMIT TO MY PATIENCE, SENORS... AND THAT LIMIT HAS BEEN REACHED! **LOCK THEM UP!**


PROTESTING STRONGLY IN A BABBLE OF THICK IRISH BROGUE, THE RIVAL SKIPPERS WERE THROWN INTO A CELL....
YOU CAN'T DO THIS, HERNANDEZ! I DEMAND TO SEE THE BRITISH CONSUL! I KNOW MY RIGHTS!
OPEN UP THIS DOOR, YOU JACK-BOOTED SAND-HOPPERS! YOU CAN'T KEEP ME IN HERE WITH THIS TIPPERARY TRAMP!

CAREY'S ALREADY REDDENED FACE TURNED PURPLE AT CONNOR'S FRESH INSULT - AND WITH AN ANGRY SNARL THE FIGHT WAS ON AGAIN.
A TIPPERARY TRAMP, IS IT? WHY, I'LL KNOCK YOU THROUGH THESE BARS — OOOFF!
TOO SLOW, OLD MAN!

THE TERRIFIC RACKET OF THE FIGHT REVERBERATED THROUGHOUT THE JAIL AND THE POLICE ONCE AGAIN CAME RUNNING TO SEPARATE CONNOR AND CAREY.
QUICKLY— THEY WILL KILL EACH OTHER FOR SURE! THEY ARE COMPLETELY MAD, THESE IRISH!
HOLD THAT! NOW WHO'S A TIPPERARY TRAMP..?

THIS TIME THE POLICE WADED IN WITH BATONS RAISED....
LOOK OUT, DAN —THEY'RE PLAYING IT ROUGH! IF THAT'S THE WAY THEY WANT IT —
...AAGH!

AS CAREY WENT DOWN, CONNOR CHARGED IN AND BELABOURED THE POLICE WITH THE STOOL ....
KNOCK AN OLD MAN DOWN WITH A STICK, WOULD YOU? WELL, TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME!

BUT SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS SOON DESPATCHED CONNOR IN THE SAME MANNER AS CAREY. THEN THE TWO UNCONSCIOUS SKIPPERS WERE THROWN INTO SEPARATE CELLS.
I DON'T GET IT! FIRST THEY TRY TO KILL EACH OTHER, AND WHEN WE TRY TO STOP THEM, THEY ATTACK US! I SHALL NEVER UNDERSTAND THESE TWO ... NEVER!

EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING THE CLANGING OF CELL DOORS JARRED TWO VERY SORE HEADS INTO WAKEFULNESS.
COME ON OUT, YOU TWO! YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT VISITOR WAITING TO SEE YOU!
...OOOH!
BEJABERS! WHAT RAN OVER ME?

IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO BE RID OF THE FIGHTING SEA CAPTAINS, CAPTAIN HERNANDEZ HAD CONTACTED THE BRITISH EMBASSY STAFF IN RIO.
GREAT SCOTT, CAREY... AND YOU TOO, CONNOR! YOU'RE BOTH AN UTTER DISGRACE! IF YOU WERE ANY SORT OF MEN AT ALL YOU'D BE HEADING YOUR SHIPS TOWARDS THE U.K. AT THIS VERY MOMENT! YOU MUST SURELY REALISE THAT EVERY MERCHANT SHIP IS VITAL TO BRITAIN IF SHE IS TO WIN THIS WAR!
WAR..?

THE DATE WAS 4th SEPTEMBER 1939. THE UNITED KINGDOM HAD BEEN AT WAR WITH NAZI GERMANY FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. BUT CONNOR AND CAREY KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT.

YES, WAR! MEN ARE DYING AT THIS VERY MINUTE ... BUT WHAT DO YOU CARE? YOU'D LET OTHER SEAMEN PERISH IN ORDER TO GET THE VITAL SUPPLIES TO BRITAIN WHILE YOU GROW FAT AND LAZY! IF YOU EXPECT ME TO PAY YOUR FINES THIS TIME, YOU'RE MISTAKEN! GOOD DAY!

BUT...

AS THE STORMY OFFICIAL STRODE FROM THE OFFICE THE RIVAL CAPTAINS EYED EACH OTHER IN STONY SILENCE. SUDDENLY, CAREY TURNED TO HERNANDEZ ....

ALL RIGHT, HERNANDEZ ... HOW MUCH IS THE FINE THIS TIME?

OH NO, CAPTAIN ... NOT SO FAST! THIS TIME IT IS MUCH MORE SERIOUS. THERE'S AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE FOR ASSAULT AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS!

IN A FLASH CAREY WAS ONCE AGAIN TENSED WITH ANGER.

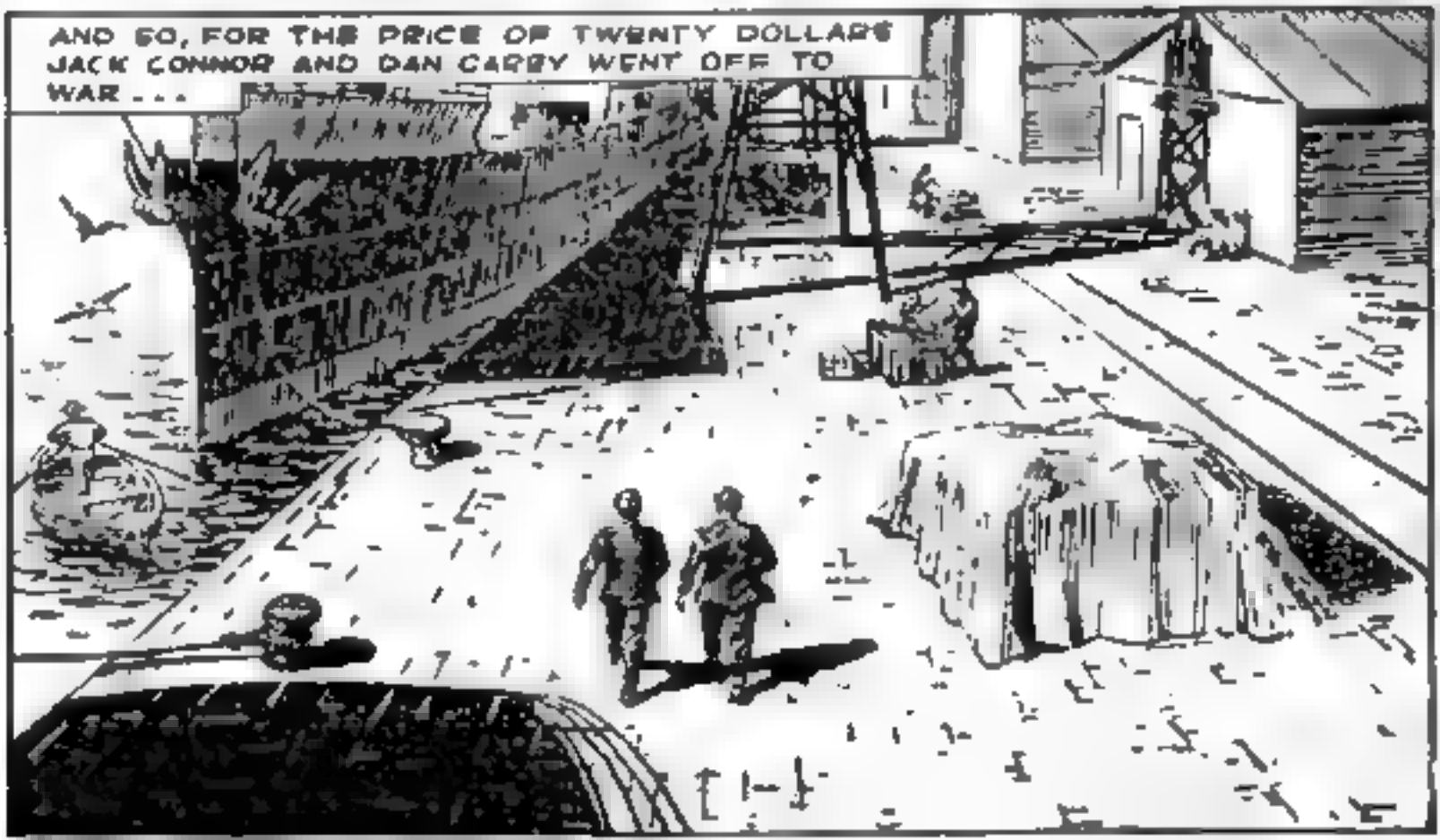
NOW, DON'T TRY TO SWING THAT ONE ON ME, HERNANDEZ! IT WAS THIS YOUNG PUP HERE WHO STARTED THAT TROUBLE! I WAS UNCONSCIOUS!

WHY, YOU UNGRATEFUL OLD GOAT! I WAS DEFENDING YOU ALL THE TIME! DON'T TRY TO PUT THE BLAME ON ME CAREY, OR I'LL BUST YOU BETWEEN THE EYES!

THE POLICE CHIEF SPRANG FRANTICALLY BETWEEN THE TWO CAPTAINS....
SENORS, PLEASE — NO MORE FIGHTING! I BEG OF YOU! PERHAPS, AFTER ALL, IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I DROPPED THE CHARGE OF ASSAULT... BUT ONLY ON ONE CONDITION!
WHAT CONDITION, HERNANDEZ?
THE CONDITION IS THAT YOU LEAVE RIO DE JANEIRO AND NEVER COME BACK! BECAUSE IF YOU DO I'LL SLAP YOU, BOTH IN JAIL FOR A TERM YOU WON'T EASILY FORGET! YOU UNDERSTAND, SENORS..?
WE UNDERSTAND, HERNANDEZ! NOW, TELL US WHAT OTHER DAMAGES WE OWE YOU AND WE'LL GET GOING! WE'VE A WAR ON OUR HANDS...

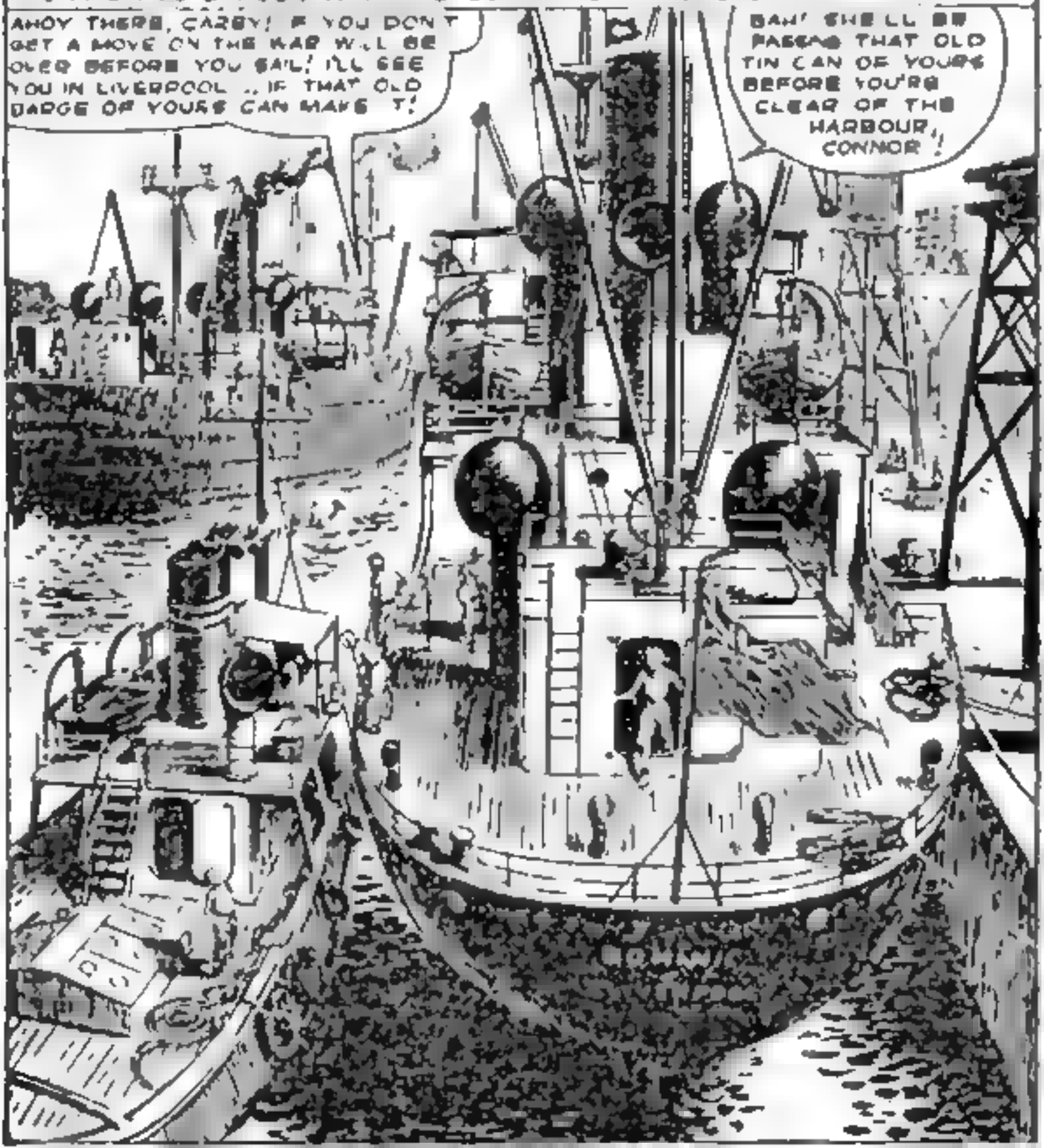
HERNANDEZ EYED THE BURLY IRISH CAPTAINS WITH SOMETHING CLOSE TO RESPECT. HE KNEW WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO. THEY WERE SEAMEN AND THEIR COUNTRY WAS AT WAR. THEIR FIGHT WAS GOING TO BE ONE OF THE HARDEST AND MOST DANGEROUS FIGHTS OF ALL . . . .

AND SO, FOR THE PRICE OF TWENTY DOLLARS JACK CONNOR AND DAN CASEY WENT OFF TO WAR . . .



Chapter 2. U-Boat Attack

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR, BEFORE HITLER CONQUERED THE SOUTHERN FRENCH PORTS, THE U-BOAT WAS INCAPABLE OF LONG PATROLS INTO THE ATLANTIC. THEIR METHOD OF ATTACK THEN WAS TO LIE IN WAIT AROUND THE MAIN BRITISH PORTS AND TORPEDO THE INCOMING AND DEPARTING SHIPS. IT WAS INTO THIS DANGER THAT THE *CONWAY STAR* SAILED



ENRAGED AT BEING LEFT BEHIND, CAREY CURSED HIS CREW AND THE SWEATING DOCK LABOURERS UNMERCIFULLY ....

BATTEN DOWN THAT FORWARD HATCH, YOU LAZY SWABS! MISTER MATE ... GET HOLD OF THAT MECHANICAL MENACE OF A CHIEF ENGINEER AND TELL HIM THAT I WANT THIS SHIP AT MAXIMUM REVS THE MINUTE I GIVE THE WORD! NOW LOOK ALIVE!

AYE AYE, SKIPPER!

IT WAS EVENTUALLY FIVE HOURS AFTER THE SAILING OF CONNOR'S SHIP THAT THE FIRST MATE OF THE *DOMINIC II* REPORTED TO CAREY'S CABIN ....

SHE'S READY TO PROCEED, SKIPPER!

RIGHT, CHIEF! STAND BY TO CAST OFF! IF I HAVE TO, I'LL MAKE THIS SHIP STAND ON END TO CATCH THAT YOUNG VARMINT, CONNOR!

FOR A FREIGHTER OF HER CLASS AND REPUTATION THE *DOMINIC* WAS FAST - AND SO, FOR THAT MATTER, WAS THE *CONWAY STAR*. WITH HER BOWS HEADED INTO THE BROAD ATLANTIC, *DOMINIC II* WAS SOON PUSHING ON TWELVE KNOTS.

HEY DAN! YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO KEEP HER GOING AT THIS RATE ALL THE WAY HOME, DO YOU? FIVE THOUSAND MILES OF THIS WILL BUST HER BOILERS!

I EXPECT YOU TO DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD, CHIEF! CONNOR'S NEVER BEATEN ME FOR SPEED YET AND HE'S NOT GOING TO NOW! GET BACK BELOW AND GIVE HER SOME STICK!

Collision Course

THERE WAS AS YET NO IMMEDIATE DANGER FROM THE ENEMY, BUT THEIR TRIP WAS SPICED BY THEIR KEEN RIVALRY.

IS THE *DOMINIC* GAINING ON US, SKIPPER?

NO, SHE'S STILL ABOUT FOUR HOURS STEAMING AWAY. WE'LL SLOW UP A LITTLE JUST TO TEASE THAT OLD BARNACLED CAPTAIN OF HERS! RING DOWN HALF AHEAD!

SLOW

HALF

FULL

THEY STAYED TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THEIR LONG VOYAGE HOME. BUT AS DAWN BROKE THREE DAYS OUT FROM ENGLAND, THEIR BITTER RIVALRY WAS REPLACED BY CONCERN FOR THE DANGEROUS WATERS AHEAD.

MORNING, SKIPPER! THE *COMMY-STAR* IS STILL THERE! I DIDN'T LET HER OUT OF MY SIGHT ALL NIGHT. I KEPT HER LIGHTS IN SIGHT ALL THE TIME!

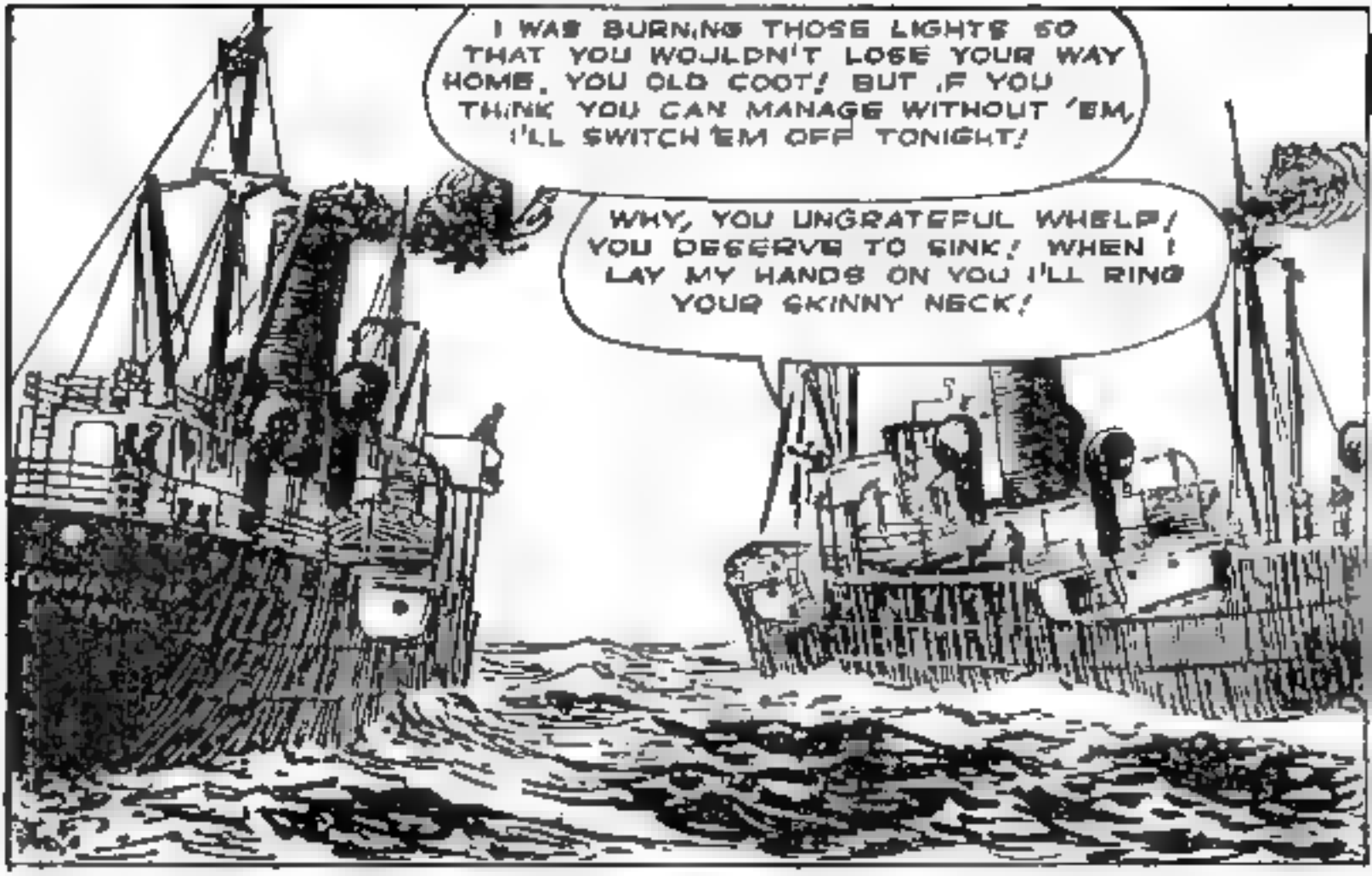
AYE... I SAW THOSE LIGHTS MYSELF. SHE WAS LIT UP LIKE A SEASIDE CARNIVAL! A U-BOAT COULD SPOT HER A MILE OFF! MAKE A SIGNAL FOR CONNOR TO SLOW DOWN. I'LL GIVE HIM A PIECE OF MY MIND!

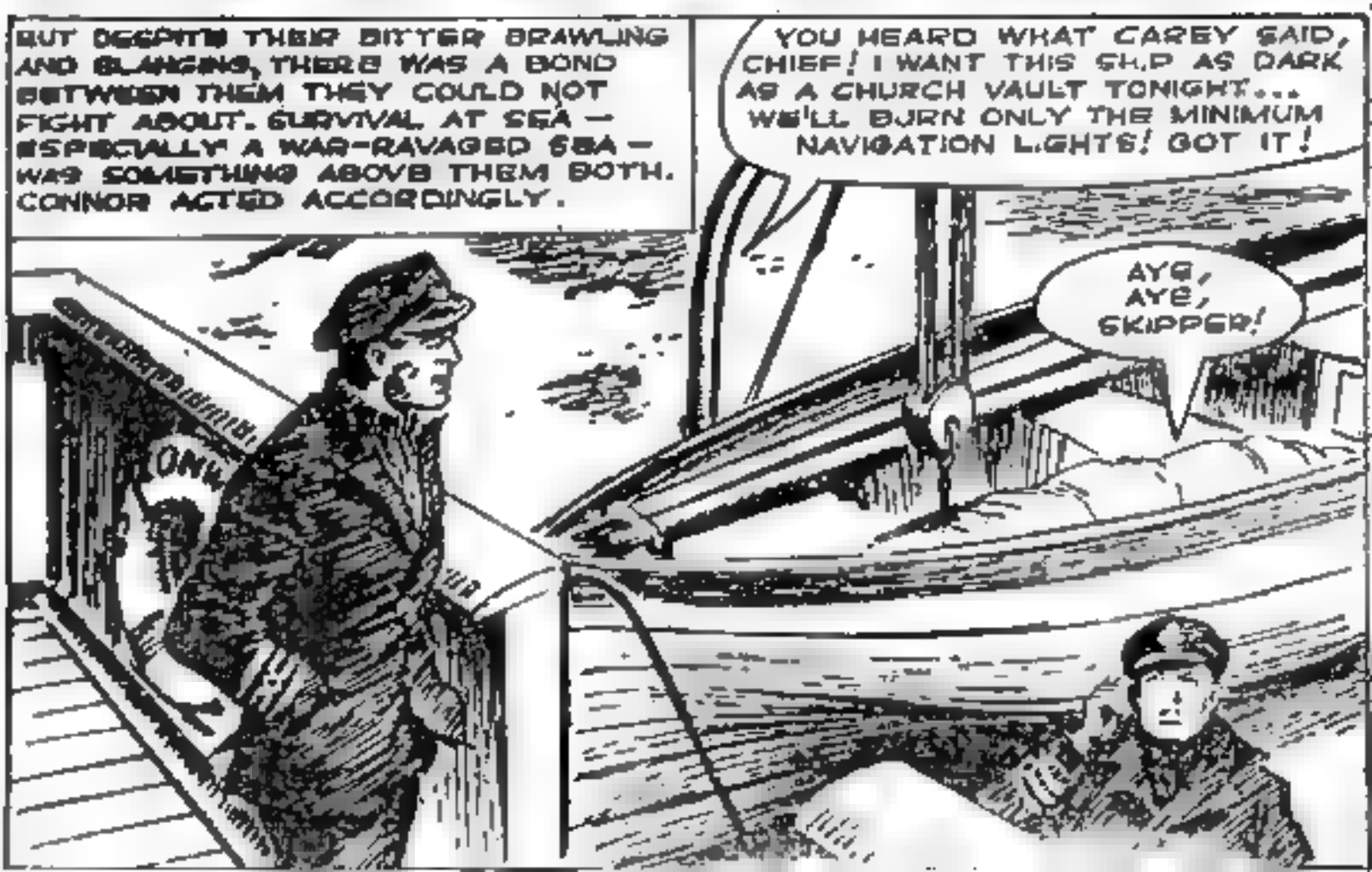
SIGNAL FROM THE *DOMINIC* SKIPPER! SHE WANTS US TO SLOW DOWN! IT'S URGENT!

URGENT...? WHAT'S THAT OLD DOG UP TO NOW? I DON'T SUPPOSE HE'S TRYING ANY TRICKS AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME... IT'S TOO DANGEROUS! SLOW AHEAD!

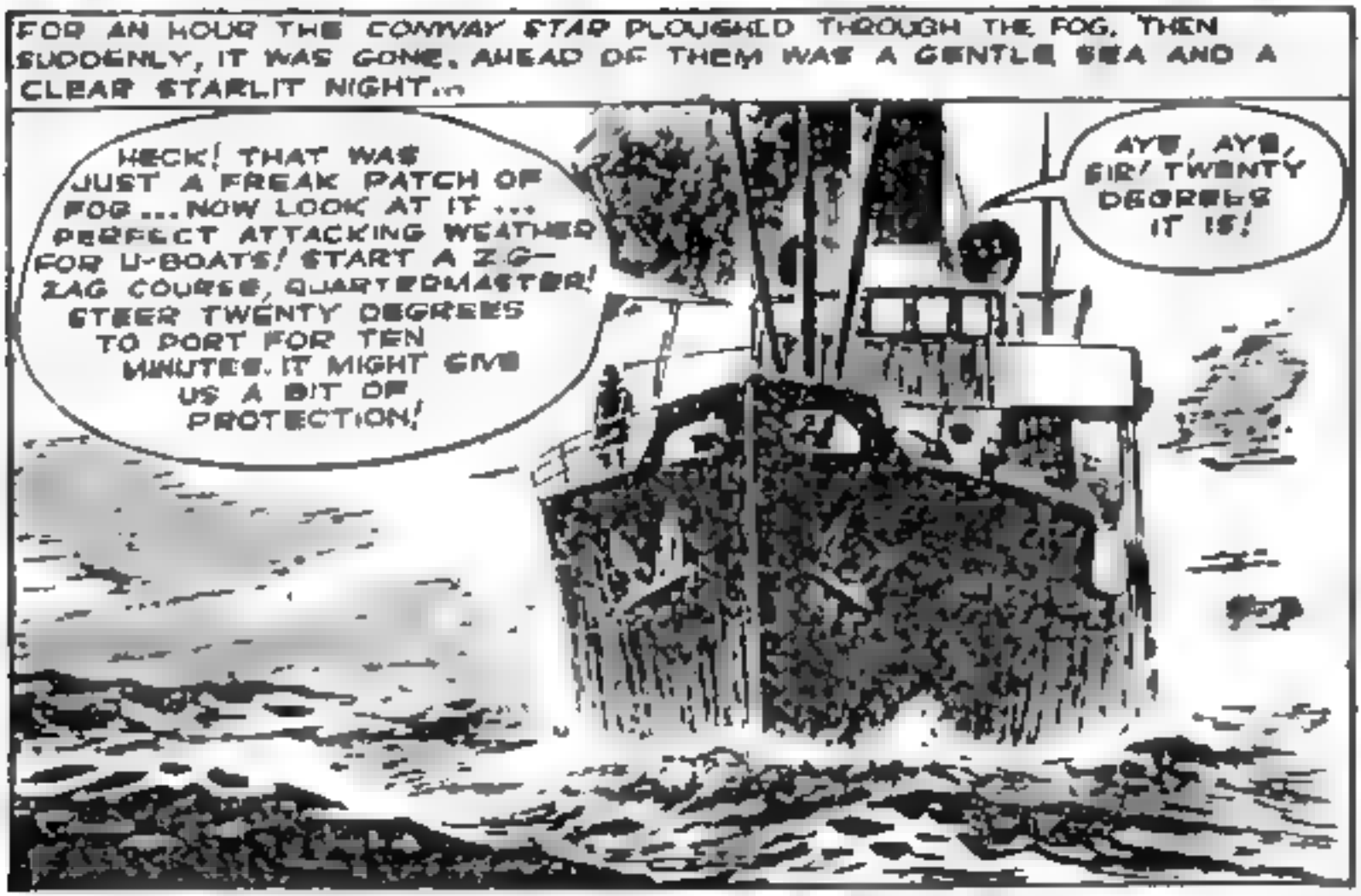
SLOW AHEAD SHE IS, CAP'N!

AS THE TWO SHIPS DREW LEVEL AND WALLOWED ON THE BROAD ATLANTIC ROLLERS, CAREY'S VOICE BOOMED OUT ACROSS THE WATER ....
LISTEN, CONNOR! YOU MIGHT LIKE ATTRACTING U-BOATS TO YOURSELF, BUT DON'T START BRINGING THEM AROUND ME! YOU WERE BURNING ENOUGH LIGHTS LAST NIGHT TO ATTRACT THE WHOLE GERMAN FLEET!
HE'S GOT A NERVE ....! TELLING ME HOW TO RUN MY SHIP!


I WAS BURNING THOSE LIGHTS SO THAT YOU WOULDN'T LOSE YOUR WAY HOME, YOU OLD COOT! BUT IF YOU THINK YOU CAN MANAGE WITHOUT 'EM, I'LL SWITCH 'EM OFF TONIGHT!
WHY, YOU UNGRATEFUL WHELP! YOU DESERVE TO SINK! WHEN I LAY MY HANDS ON YOU I'LL RING YOUR SKINNY NECK!


BUT DESPITE THEIR BITTER BRAWLING AND CLANGING, THERE WAS A BOND BETWEEN THEM THEY COULD NOT FIGHT ABOUT. SURVIVAL AT SEA — ESPECIALLY A WAR-RAVAGED SEA — WAS SOMETHING ABOVE THEM BOTH. CONNOR ACTED ACCORDINGLY.
YOU HEARD WHAT CAREY SAID, CHIEF! I WANT THIS SHIP AS DARK AS A CHURCH VAULT TONIGHT... WE'LL BURN ONLY THE MINIMUM NAVIGATION LIGHTS! GOT IT!
AYE, AYE, SKIPPER!

THAT NIGHT, AS THEY DARKENED SHIP, THEY RAN INTO A THICK, SWIRLING PATCH OF FOG ....
I RECKON I'D BETTER SEE ABOUT POSTING A LOOKOUT ON ON THE FO'C'SLE, SKIPPER!
GOOD IDEA, CHIEF! THIS FOG IS A DARN NUISANCE, BUT AT LEAST IT WILL GIVE US SOME COVER. I KNOW WE CAN'T SEE ANYTHING BUT NEITHER CAN ANY U-BOATS IF THEY'RE AROUND!


FOR AN HOUR THE CONWAY STAR PLOUGHED THROUGH THE FOG. THEN SUDDENLY, IT WAS GONE. AHEAD OF THEM WAS A GENTLE SEA AND A CLEAR STARLIT NIGHT...
HECK! THAT WAS JUST A FREAK PATCH OF FOG ... NOW LOOK AT IT ... PERFECT ATTACKING WEATHER FOR U-BOATS! START A ZIG-ZAG COURSE, QUARTERMASTER! STEER TWENTY DEGREES TO PORT FOR TEN MINUTES. IT MIGHT GIVE US A BIT OF PROTECTION!
AYE, AYE, SIR! TWENTY DEGREES IT IS!

Collision Course

THEIR ZIG-ZAG COURSE TOOK THEM INTO THE PERILOUS WESTERN APPROACHES TO BRITAIN'S SHORES.

IF ONLY WE HAD A GUN ABOARD, BOSPER — YOU FEEL SO HELPLESS LIKE THIS!

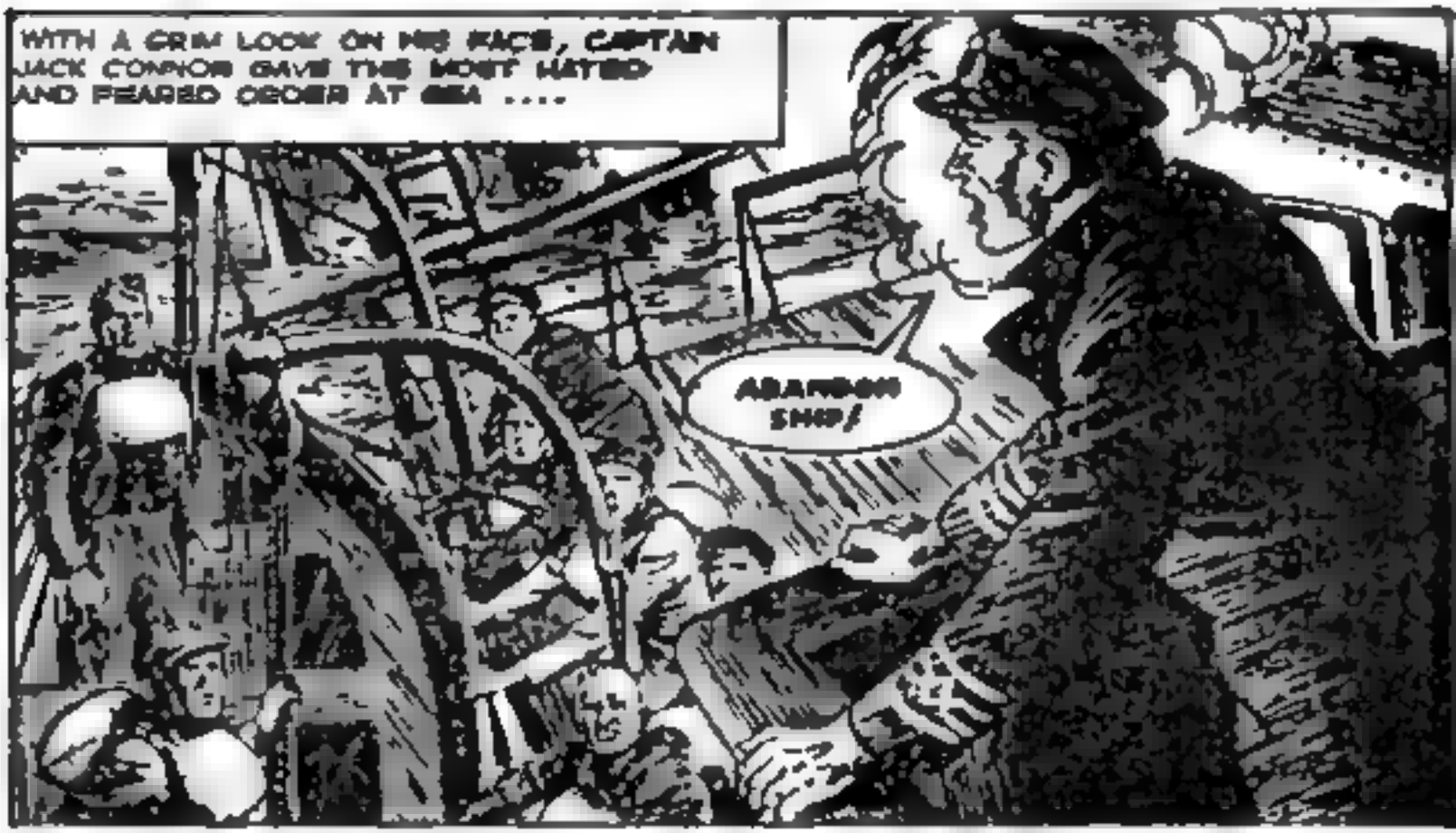
A GUN WOULDN'T BE MUCH GOOD AGAINST A U-BOAT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, CHIEF! BUT IF YOU WANT SOMETHING TO DO, GO AND CHECK THE BOATS... WE MIGHT AS WELL BE READY!

DESPITE THE KEEN WATCH KEPT ABOARD THE *COMMIN' STAR*, NO ONE SAW THE SLIM METALLIC OBJECT PROTRUDING FROM THE DARK WATERS ON THEIR STARBOARD QUARTER.

THE SOLITARY MERCHANTMAN WAS A PERFECT TARGET FOR A MARAUDING U-BOAT AND ITS CAPTAIN MADE NO MISTAKE WITH HIS AIM.

WITHIN SECONDS OF THE EXPLOSION, THE COMMY SHIP BEGAN TO SETTLE BY THE STERN.
WHAT'S THE DAMAGE, CHIEF?
THE SWINE HIT US SQUARE IN THE ENGINE ROOM! IT FLOODED IN SECONDS... THE POOR BLOKES NEVER STOOD A CHANCE OF GETTING OUT! SHE WON'T STAY AFLOAT LONG, SKIPPER!

THE ESCAPE OF HISSING STEAM AND THE MUFFLED EXPLOSIONS DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE SHIP DROWNED THE CRIES OF THE INJURED AND THE SHOUTS OF THE CREW WHO WERE FRANTICALLY TRYING TO LOWER THE BOATS.
LOOK LIVELY THERE! GIVE A HAND TO THAT FALL! COME ON... THE OLD GIRL'S GOING FAST!


WITH A GRIM LOOK ON HIS FACE, CAPTAIN JACK CONNOR GAVE THE MOST HATED AND FEARED ORDER AT SEA ....
ABANDON SHIP!

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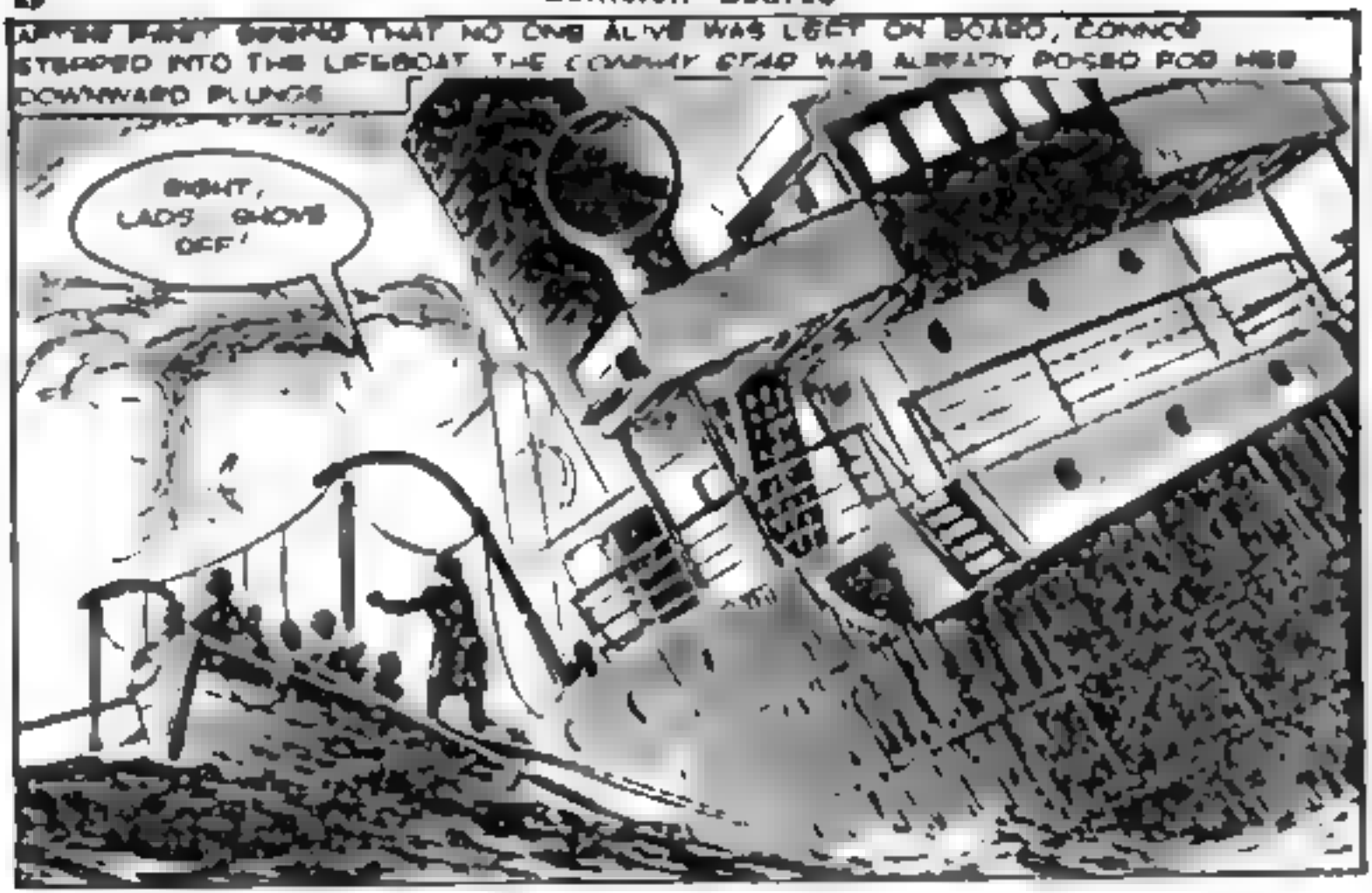
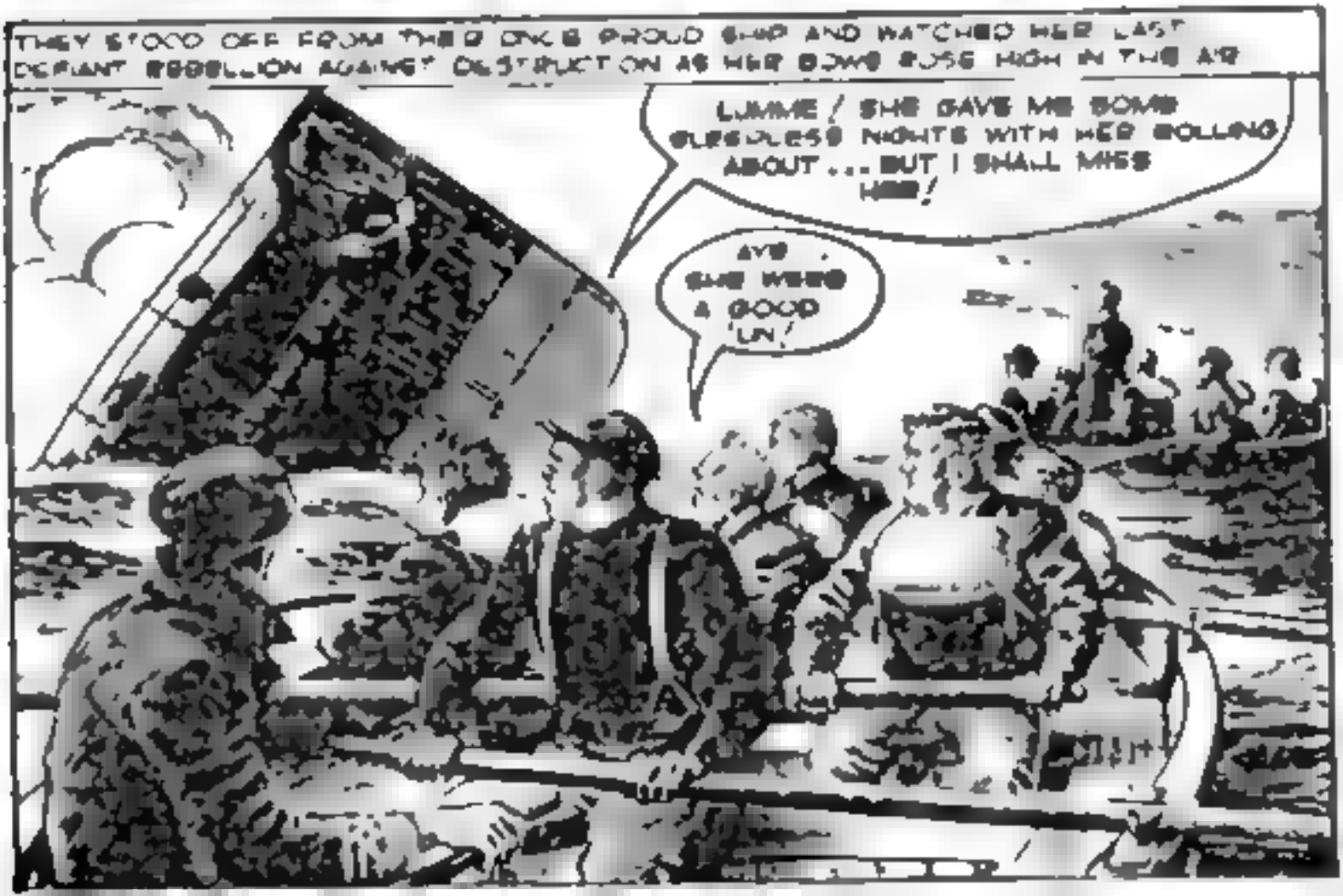




WITH A TREMENDOUS BLAST OF ESCAPING STEAM AND AIR, THE CONNING STEAP VANISHED BENEATH THE SURFACE. BUT THEN ...

STONE THE PERISHING CROWS! LOOK, SKIPPER! IT'S THE U-BOAT! IT'S SURFACING!

FIRST THE BLUNT SHAPE OF THE U-BOAT TOWER AND THEN ITS LONG BLACK HULL BROKE SURFACE NOT THIRTY FEET FROM THE DEFENCELESS LIFEBOATS ...

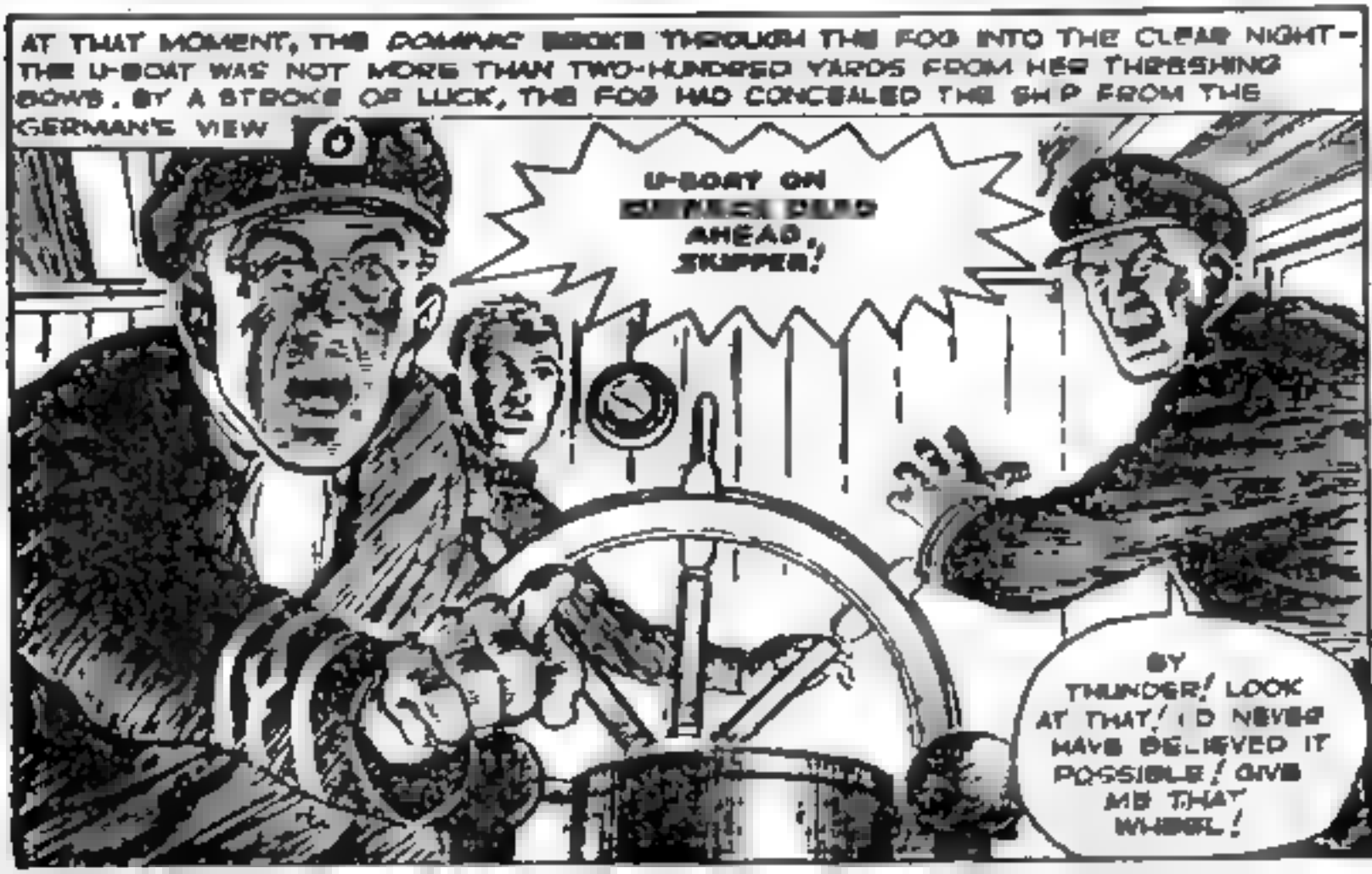
THE SWINE! THEY'RE NOT SATISFIED WITH WHAT THEY'VE DONE . THEY'VE GOT TO COME AND GLOAT OVER IT! BUT WE'D BETTER WATCH OUT! IF THEY START MACHINE-GUNNING THEN WE'D STAND A BETTER CHANCE IN THE WATER! BE READY TO JUMP, LADS!

BUT THERE WAS NO MACHINE-GUNNING. INSTEAD, THE THREE GERMANS WHO APPEARED IN THE CONNING TOWER SEEMED TO BE CONTENT TO IDLY WATCH THE GENTLY ROLLING LIFEBOATS. BUT ABOVE THE SOFT HUM OF THE U-BOAT'S MOTORS CAME ANOTHER SOUND, MORE AUDIBLE AT WATER LEVEL.

CAN'T I HEAR A SHIP'S PROPELLER NOISES, SKIPPER?

GLORY BE! THAT'LL BE THE *DOMINIC*! CAREY MUST HAVE HEARD THE EXPLOSION AND IS HEADING THIS WAY! BUT WHEN HE COMES OUT OF THE FOG AND THE U-BOAT SPOTS HIM, HE WON'T STAND A CHANCE!

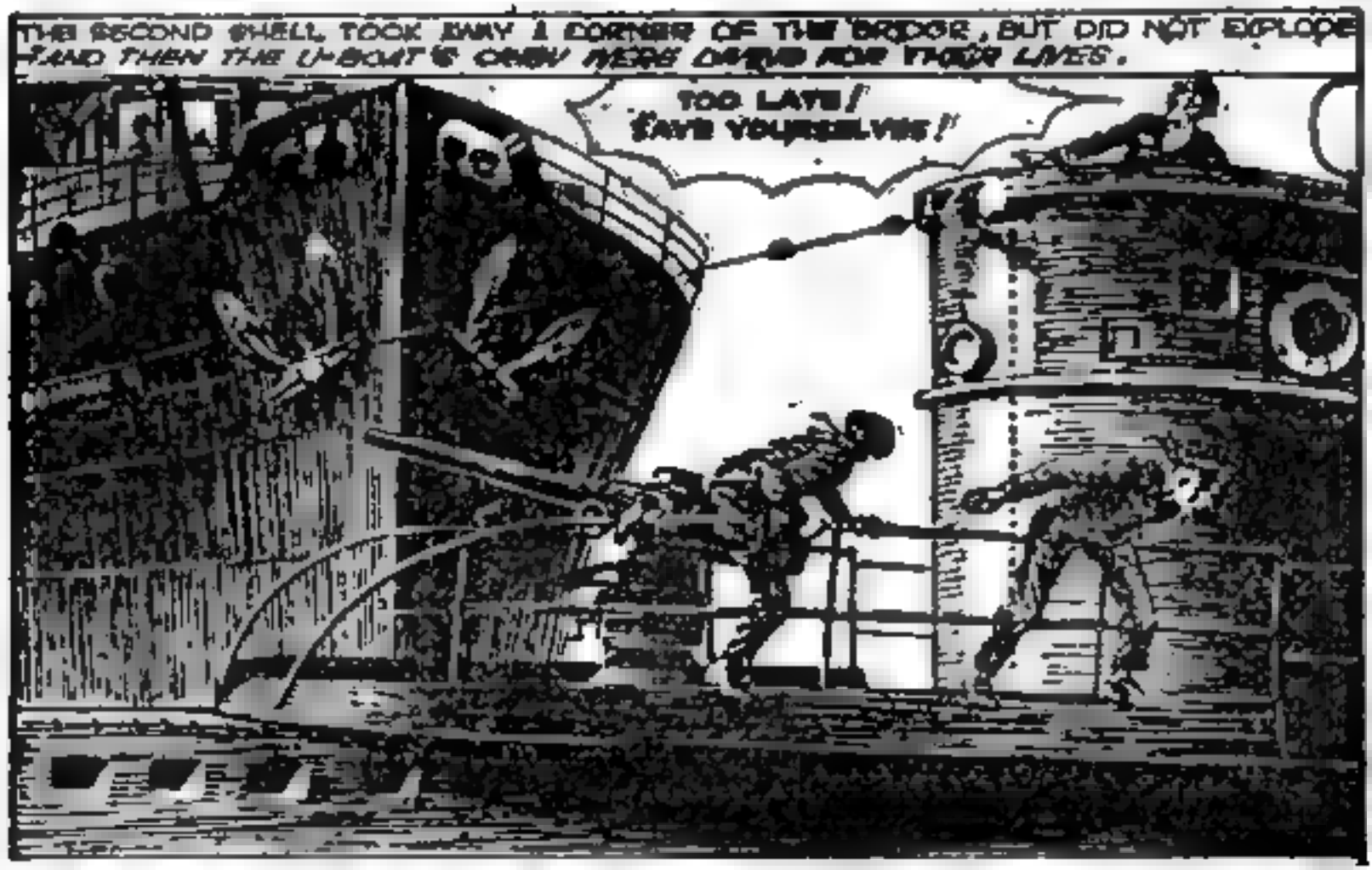
CONNOR WAS RIGHT— DAN CASEY HAD HEARD THE EXPLODING TORPEDO AND HE WAS RUNNING THE DOMINIC AT FULL SPEED THROUGH THE FOG PATCH TOWARDS THEM....
LET'S HOPE THEY MANAGED TO GET THE BOATS AWAY BEFORE SHE WENT DOWN. IF THEY DIDN'T .. THEN I SHALL MISS BEATING THE HIDE OFF OF THAT YOUNG PUP, CONNOR!
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, SKIPPER. MANY TIMES I'VE WISHED THE CREW OF THAT TUB INTO PLACES I WOULDN'T WANT TO GO MYSELF. BUT WHEN YOU KNOW THEY'RE IN TROUBLE, WELL—


AT THAT MOMENT, THE DOMINIC BROKE THROUGH THE FOG INTO THE CLEAR NIGHT— THE U-BOAT WAS NOT MORE THAN TWO-HUNDRED YARDS FROM HER THRESHING BOWS. BY A STROKE OF LUCK, THE FOG HAD CONCEALED THE SHIP FROM THE GERMAN'S VIEW
U-BOAT ON [redacted] AHEAD, SKIPPER!
BY THUNDER! LOOK AT THAT! I'D NEVER HAVE BELIEVED IT POSSIBLE! GIVE ME THAT WHEEL!

AND WHEN THE GERMANS SENSED THE APPEARANCE OF THE SHIP ON THE SCENE ONLY YARDS SEPARATED THEM.

THE GERMAN GUN CREW POURED OUT OF THE CONNING TOWER ON TO THE CASING AND WITHIN SECONDS, THEIR FIRST SHOT WAS FIRED. IT MISSED THE DOMINIC'S [redacted] INCHES.

THE SECOND SHELL TOOK AWAY A CORNER OF THE BRIDGE, BUT DID NOT EXPLODE AND THEN THE U-BOAT'S CREW WERE DIVING FOR THEIR LIVES.



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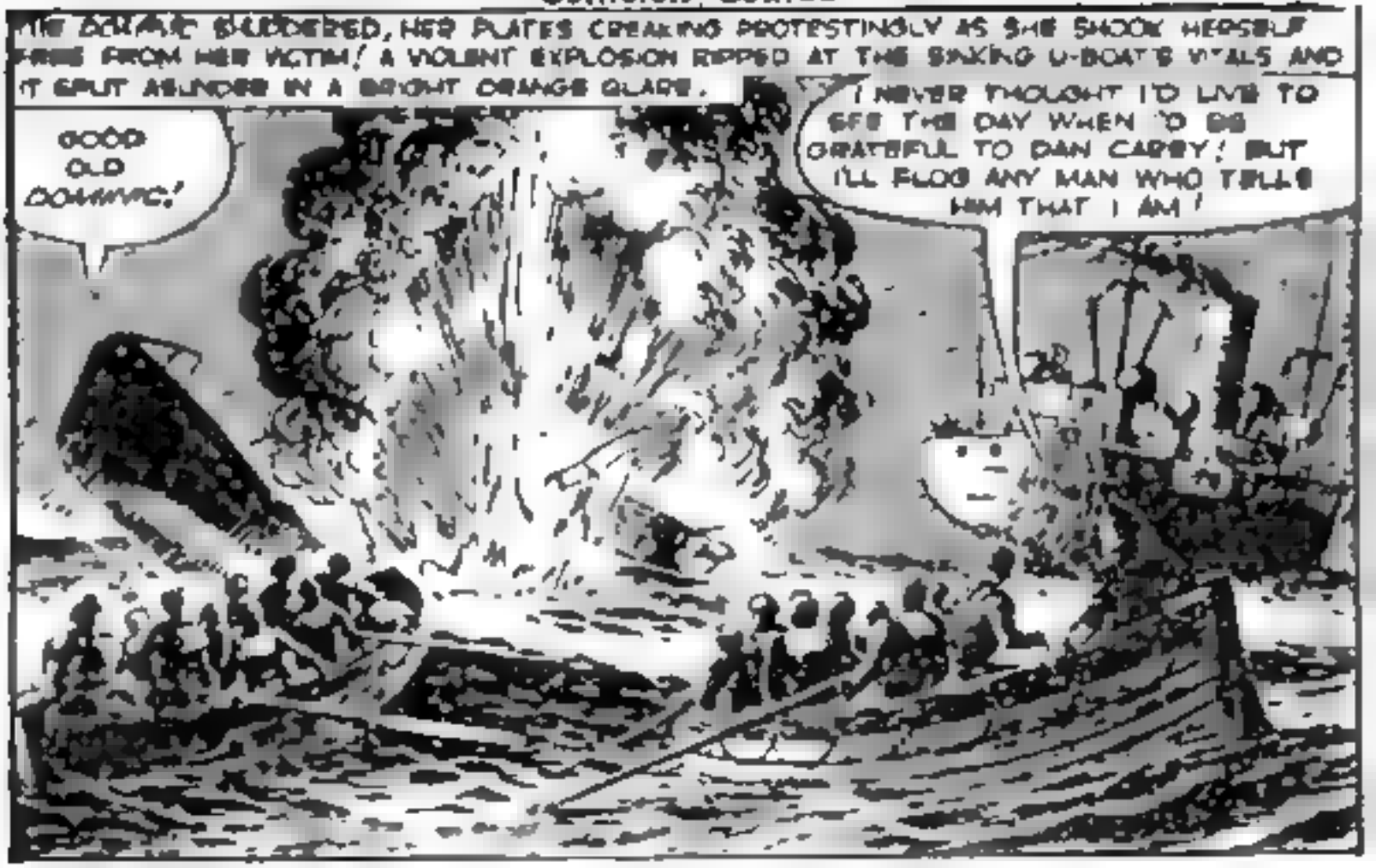
THE DERAK SHUDDERED, HER PLATES CREAKING PROTESTINGLY AS SHE SHOOK HERSELF FREE FROM HER VICTIM! A VIOLENT EXPLOSION RIPPED AT THE SINKING U-BOAT'S VITALS AND IT SPLIT ASUNDER IN A BRIGHT ORANGE GLARE.
GOOD OLD DOMINIC!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LIVE TO SEE THE DAY WHEN I'D BE GRATEFUL TO DAN CARBY! BUT I'LL FLOG ANY MAN WHO TELLS HIM THAT I AM!

IT WAS A PROUD MOMENT FOR DAN CARBY AND HIS CREW . . . AN UNARMED MERCHANT SHIP HAD DISPATCHED A DEADLY U-BOAT TO ITS DOOM . AS HIS SHIP LOST WAY TO PICK UP THE SURVIVORS, CARBY CAME OFF THE BRIDGE WITH A LIGHT TREAD . . . .
IT
JUST LOOK AT THE PROUD CAPTAIN CONNOR NOW, LADS, LOOK AT HIM! WHAT WERE THOSE REMARKS YOU MADE ABOUT AN OLD BARGE, CONNOR? I DON'T HEAR YOU MAKING THEM NOW!

Collision Course

CARBY'S EYES NARROWED SUSPICIOUSLY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN... GET RID OF YOUR SHIP? WHAT ELSE COULD THE LIKES OF YOU DO?

I'D GO TO SEA IN A PROPER SHIP, THAT'S WHAT I'D DO! JOIN THE ROYAL NAVY, GET A COMMISSION— COMMAND A FIGHTING SHIP OF MY OWN! THIS SORT OF LIFE IS ALL RIGHT FOR YOU OLD SAILORS . . . BUT IT'S NOT FOR ME!

CAREY'S BURLY FRAME EXPLODED WITH LAUGHTER . . . .

YOU AN OFFICER IN THE ROYAL NAVY? THEY WOULDN'T LET YOU THROUGH THE DOCKYARD GATE! BESIDES, WHERE WOULD YOU BE WITHOUT ME TO LOOK AFTER YOU, EH?

WELL, IF YOU THINK THAT'S SUCH A PROBLEM, OLD MAN, YOU COULD ALWAYS TRY TO JOIN UP WITH ME!

CAREY SNORTED DERISIVELY . . . .

WHAT DO YOU MEAN.. TRY TO JOIN UP WITH YOU? I COULD JOIN THE R.N. ANY TIME I LIKED! IT'S MEN LIKE ME THEY'RE AFTER ... SAILORS WHO KNOW THEIR WAY AROUND THE SEAS ... NOT YOUNG PUPS LIKE YOU!

WELL, THAT SETTLES IT THEN. I'LL SEE YOU AT THE RECRUITING OFFICE WHEN WE GET BACK! SO-ER-IF YOU CAN MANAGE TO GET THIS WRECK TO LIVERPOOL WITHOUT MY HELP, I'LL LEAVE YOU AND RETIRE TO MY CABIN.

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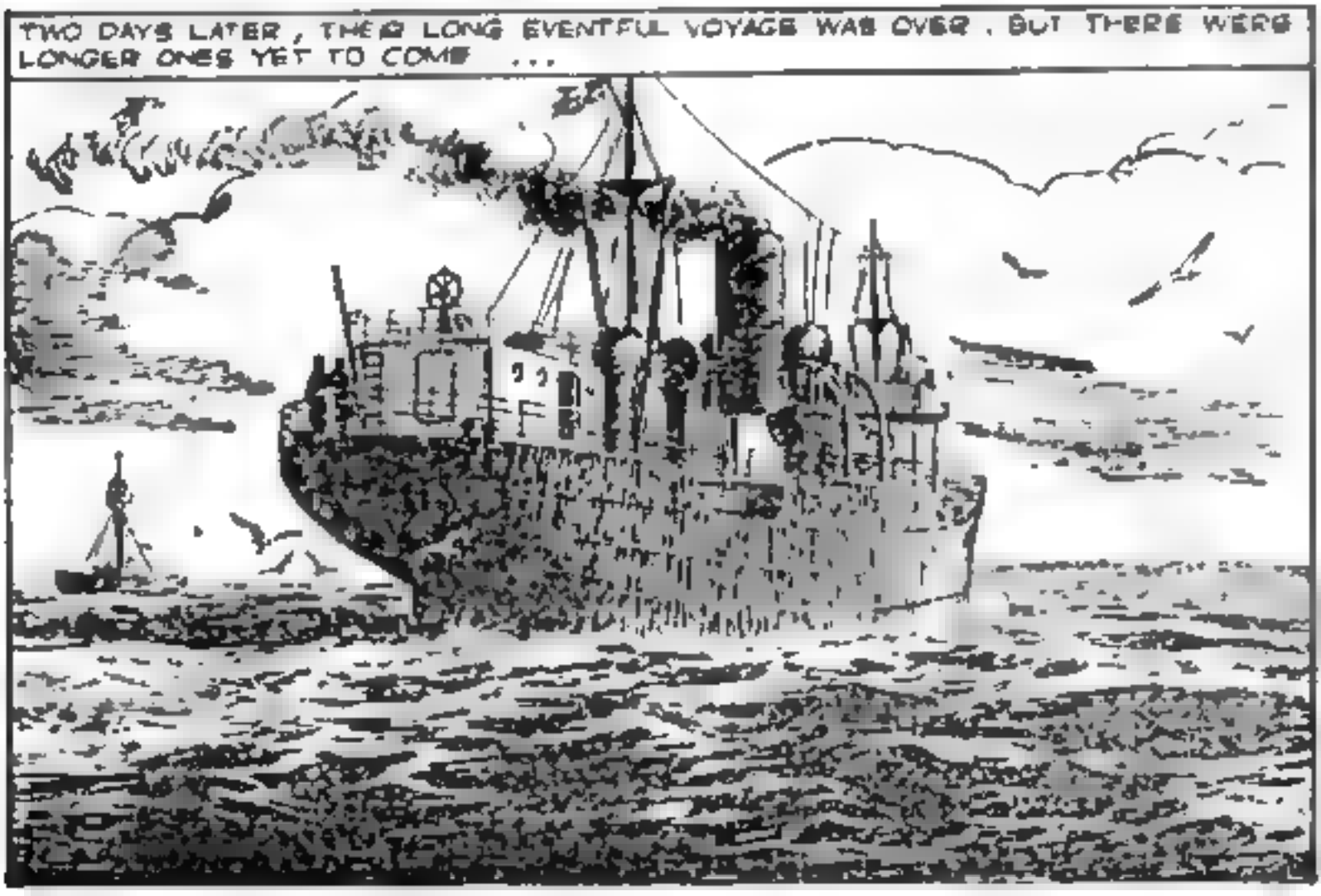
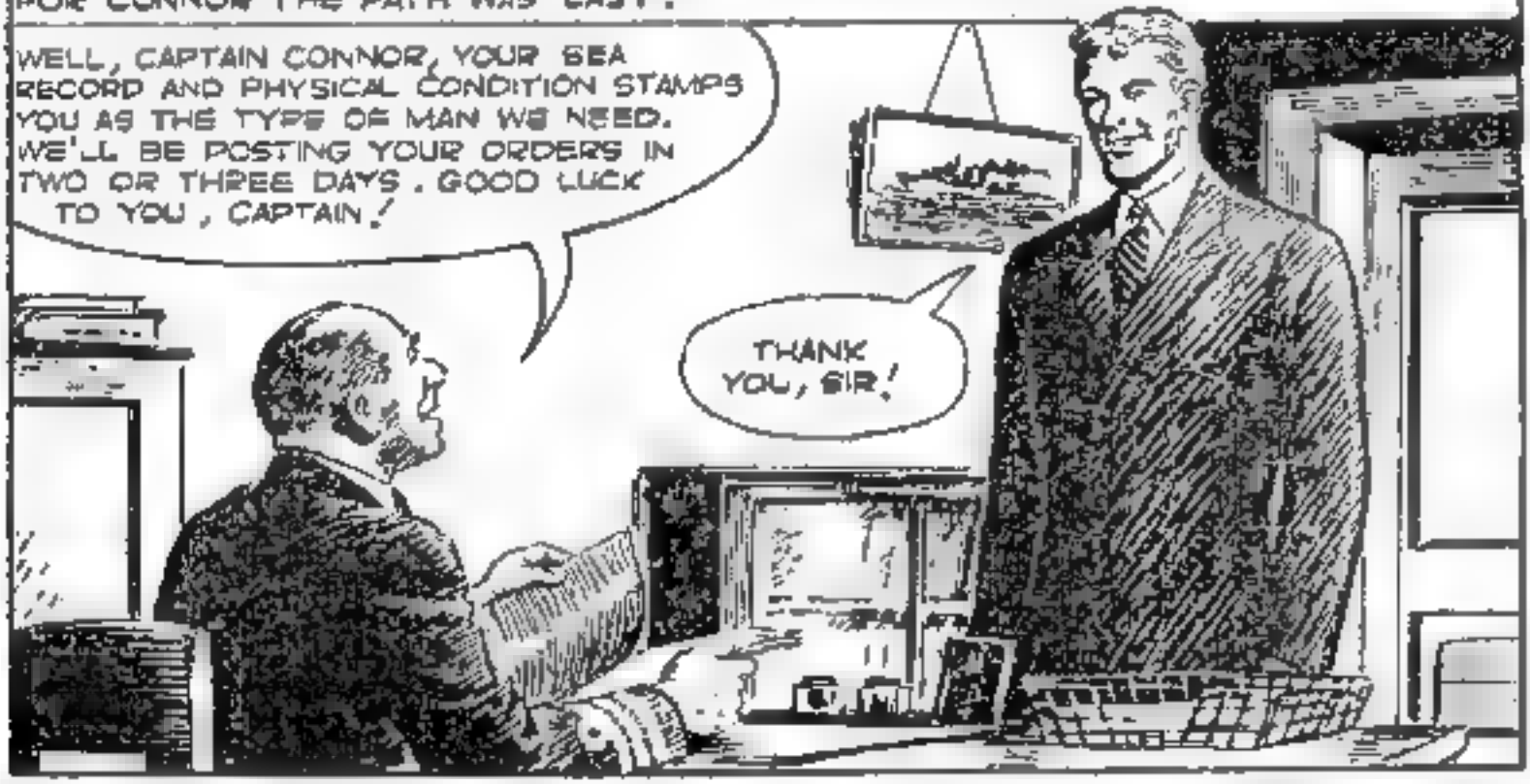


Chapter 3. BENEATH DIFFERENT FLAGS

AFTER RECEIVING THEIR DESERVED BOUQUETS FOR DESTROYING THE U-BOAT BOTH CAREY AND CONNOR WERE KEPT PRETTY BUSY IN PURSUIT OF THEIR INTENTION TO JOIN THE ROYAL NAVY. BUT HERE THEIR PATHS TOOK DIFFERENT TURNINGS. FOR CONNOR THE PATH WAS EASY.



BUT FOR CAREY, THE PATH CAME TO AN ABRUPT END ...

THE NAVAL DOCTOR NERVOUSLY BACKED UP AGAINST THE WALL AS CAREY ADVANCED THREATENINGLY TOWARDS HIM ....
WHY, YOU CLOT OF A SAW-BONES! I'VE BEEN SAILING THE SEAS FOR THIRTY YEARS MAN AND BOY .... AND THE LAST TWENTY WITH MY GAMMY LEG! WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?
I- I'M SURE YOU'RE A FINE S-SEAMAN, CAPTAIN, BUT THE R.N. HAS ITS STANDARDS... I'M S-SORRY...

BURNING WITH FRUSTRATION, CAREY TRAVELLED BACK TO LIVERPOOL AND TO HIS HOTEL. BELLIGERENTLY, HE SHOULDERED ASIDE A COUPLE OF R.N. OFFICERS ...
GIMME A DOUBLE RUM!
GOOD HEAVENS! THE MANNERS OF THE FELLOW!

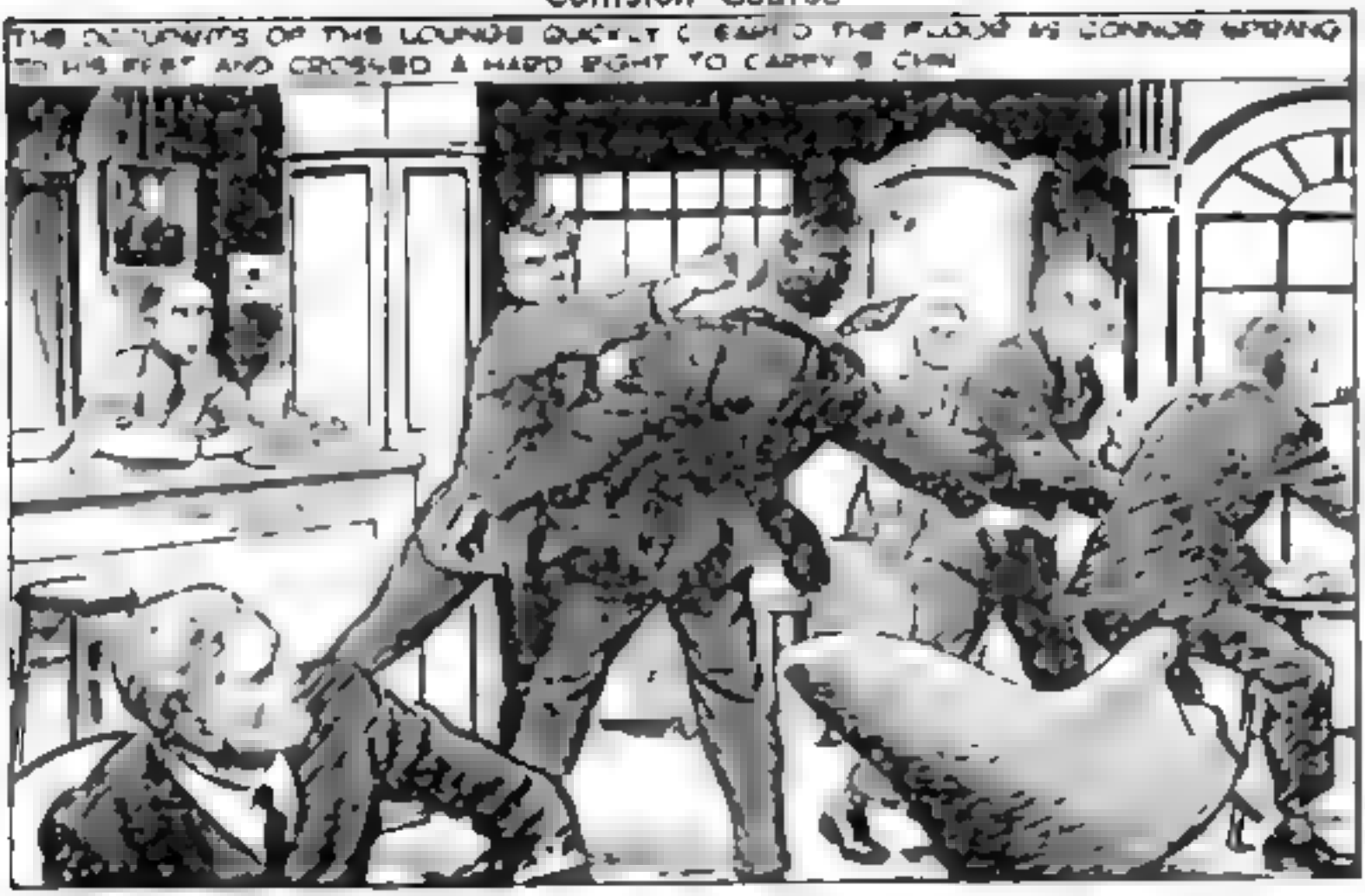
THE HOTEL LOUNGE WAS FULL OF SERVICE PERSONNEL, MOST OF THEM OF THE ROYAL NAVY, AND THAT DID NOT HELP CAREY'S ANGRY MOOD. IT WAS INTO THIS CONVIVIAL SETTING THAT THE HAPPY-GO-LUCKY JACK CONNOR ARRIVED.
WELL, IF IT ISN'T ME OLD SHIPMATE, CAPTAIN DANIEL CAREY HIMSELF. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE, DAN? I'M CELEBRATING!

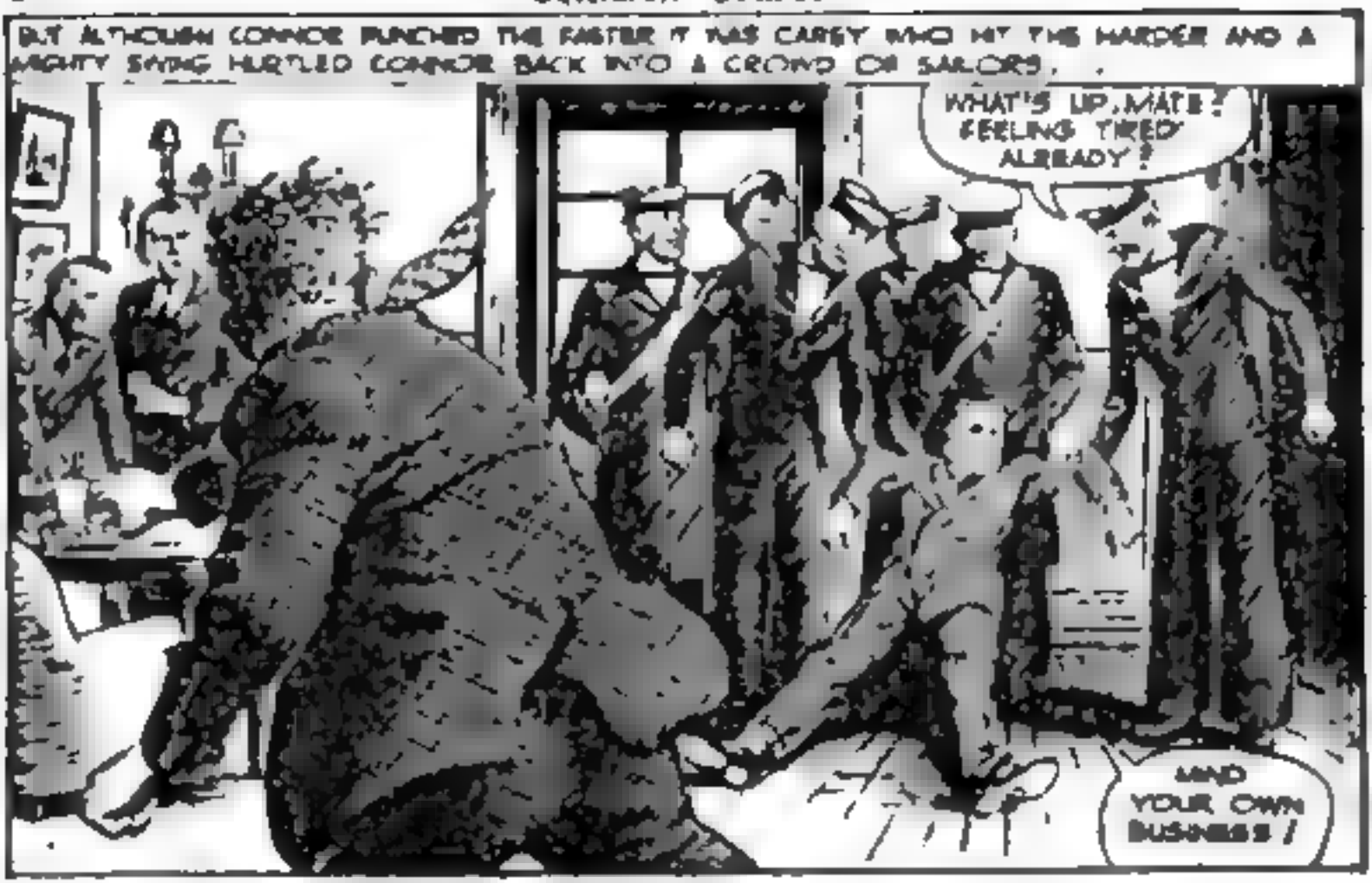
BUT CAREY WAS NOT IN A FESTIVE MOOD ....
GO TO THE DEVIL, CONNOR! TAKE YOUR GRINNING FACE OUT OF MY SIGHT BEFORE I FLATTEN IT!
NOW, IS THAT THE WAY TO GREET AN OLD FRIEND WHO HAS THIS VERY DAY JOINED HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL NAVY?
CAREY'S BYES LOOKED COLD AND MEAN ....
WHAT ..? YOU MEAN TO SAY THEY SIGNED YOU ON? A SCRAWNY HALF-BAKED CABIN BOY LIKE YOU...!
DON'T GET PERSONAL, DANNY BOY, BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU? HOW DID YOU GET ON WITH THE MEDICAL BOARD?
CAREY'S CRAGGY COUNTENANCE CLOUDED OVER ....
I WAS PASSED UNFIT! MY GAMMY LEG LET ME DOWN, CURSE IT!
THAT'S TOO BAD, DAN I AM SORRY!

BUT THE NOTE OF INSINCERITY IN CONNOR'S VOICE AND THE HIDDEN SMILE PLAYING ON HIS LIPS DID NOT GO UNNOTICED BY CAREY.
DON'T GIVE ME THAT SWEET TALK, CONNOR / YOU'VE NEVER FELT SORRY FOR ANYONE IN YOUR LIFE!
BUT I AM, DAN. DEEPLY SORRY I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DIDN'T TAKE YOU / I'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT A MAN WITH ONE LEG SHORTER THAN THE OTHER WOULD VE BEEN IDEAL FOR STANDING ON A SLOPING DECK!
WITH A BELLOW OF RAGE, CAREY PROMPTLY CLUBBED CONNOR TO THE FLOOR WITH ONE THUMP FROM HIS MIGHTY FIST.
I'LL GIVE YOU TAKE THE MICKEY OUT OF ME, CONNOR! AND DON'T TRY TO APOLOGISE.. BECAUSE I'M GOING TO BEAT THE DAYLIGHTS OUT O' YOU!
OH, WELL... HERE WE GO AGAIN!

THE OCCUPANTS OF THE LOUNGE QUICKLY CLEARED THE FLOOR AS CONNOR SPRANG TO HIS FEET AND CROSSED A HARD RIGHT TO CARFY'S CHIN

PUNCHING FAST, THE QUICKER FOOTED CONNOR DROVE DAN CARFY BACK AGAINST THE BAR.




BUT ALTHOUGH CONNOR PUNCHED THE FASTER IT WAS CASEY WHO HIT THE HARDER AND A MIGHTY SWING HURTLED CONNOR BACK INTO A CROWD OF SAILORS. .
WHAT'S UP, MATE? FEELING TIRED ALREADY?
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

AS CONNOR TRIED TO DISENTANGLE HIMSELF FROM THE SAILORS, CASEY CAME FORWARD WITH A WILD RUSH...
.OOOPS!

CAREY'S MISDIRECTED PUNCH WAS DISASTROUS ...
HIT MY MATE, WOULD YOU?
YOU SILLY OLD GOAT! NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

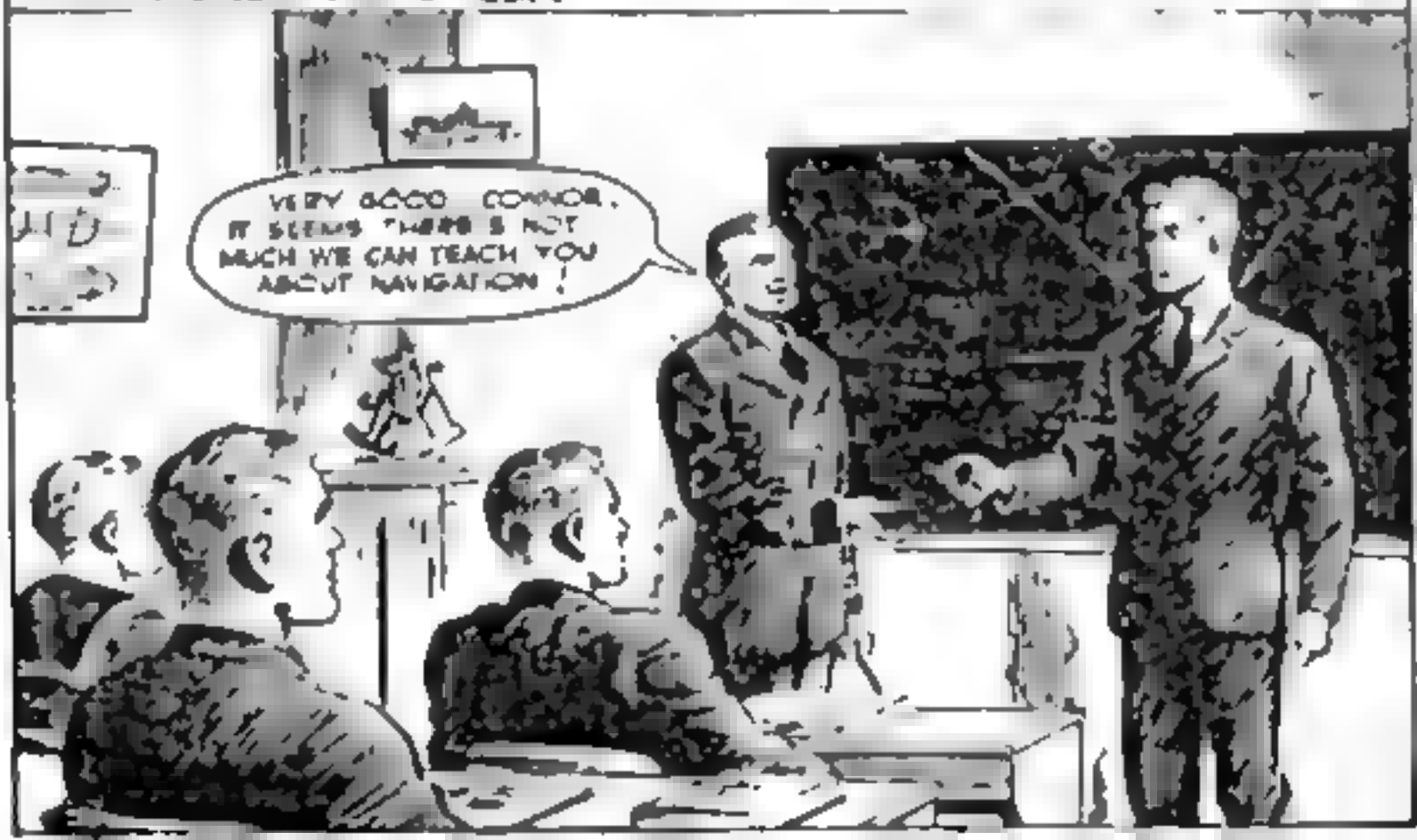
EVEN WHEN FIGHTING TOGETHER THERE WAS STILL NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN CAREY AND [redacted].
DON'T YOU CALL ME AN OLD GOAT! I'LL MURDER YOU WHEN I'M FINISHED HERE!

FIVE MINUTES LATER, THE FIGHT WAS OVER ....
AND IF EITHER OF YOU WANT ANY MORE, WE'D BE ONLY TOO PLEASED TO OBLIGE!
GO AND BOIL YOUR FAT HEAD!

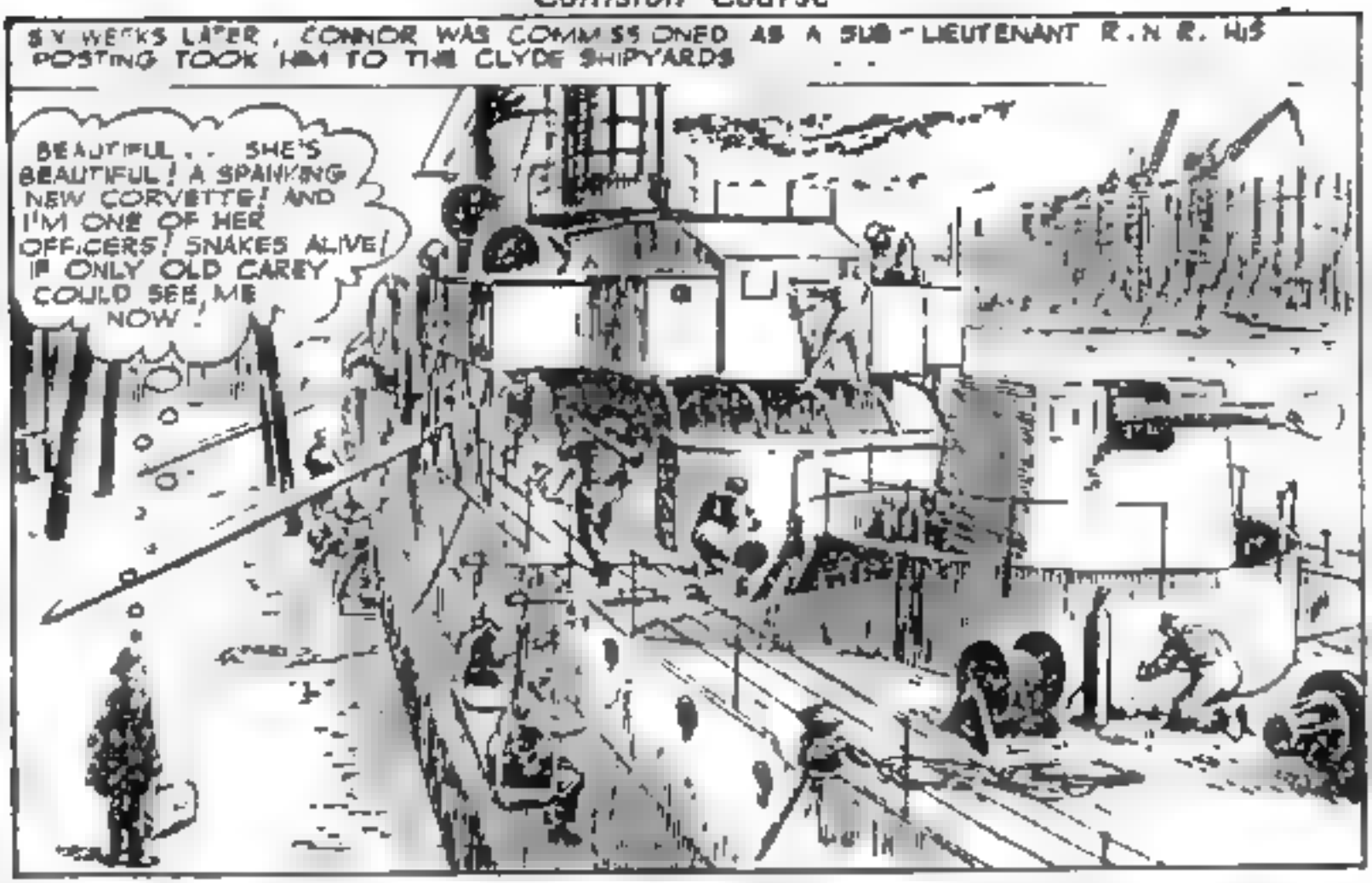
Collision Course

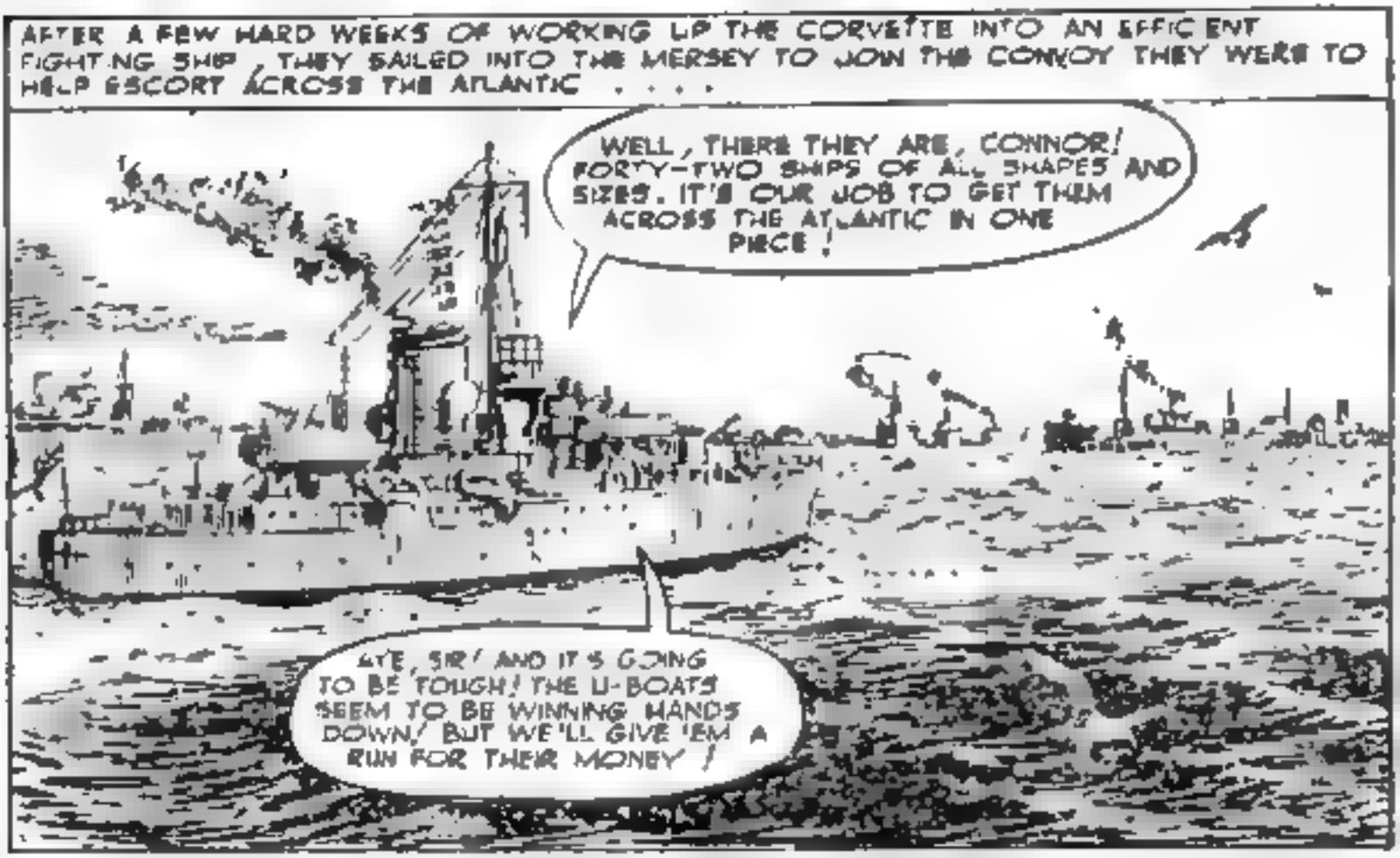
THAT HECTIC NIGHT WAS THE LAST THAT CASEY AND CONNOR SAW OF EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME. CASEY WENT BACK TO THE DOWNS — WHILE CONNOR REPORTED TO THE NAVAL BARRACKS.

CONNOR'S MASTER'S TICKET IN THE MERCHANT NAVY DID NOT ENTITLE HIM TO WALK STRAIGHT INTO A COMMISSION BUT HE WORKED HARD AND WAS SOON ON THE ROAD TO BECOMING AN OFFICER.



Collision Course





Collision Course

AS THE DOMINIC STROVE TO KEEP STATION IN THE SLOW SIX-KNOT CONVOY, CAPTAIN DAN CAREY'S TEMPER WAS BECOMING AS FILTHY AS THE WEATHER BUILDING UP AROUND HIM.

CONFOUND 'EM! WHY THE DEVIL CAN'T THEY GET A MOVE ON! WE'LL FOUNDER IN A MINUTE UNLESS WE PUT ON SOME SPEED!

THE CONVOY WAS SPREAD OUT ON A BROAD FRONT IN COLUMNS OF THREE AND THE *DOMINIC* WAS THE LEADING SHIP OF A COLUMN. AS THE SEAS BUILT UP AROUND HIM, CAREY EVENTUALLY TIRED OF THE SLOW PACE.

THIS CUSSED OCEAN'S NO PLACE TO BE WITH A STORM BREWING UP! THE SOONER WE'RE ACROSS THE OTHER SIDE THE BETTER! FULL AHEAD!

AYE, AYE, CAP'N!

BUT A LOOKOUT ON THE ESCORT COMMANDER'S DESTROYER SOON SPOTTED THE FREIGHTER PULLING OUT AHEAD OF THE CONVOY. A MESSAGE WINKED OUT TO ONE OF THE CORVETTES . . .

MESSAGE FROM THE DESTROYER, SIR! THE *DOMINIC'S* PULLED OUT OF HER STATION . . . WE'RE TO GO AND PUSH HER BACK!

RIGHT, I SEE HER! PORT TEN! STAND BY WITH THAT LOUD-HAILER, CONNOR!

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE, S.R!

PORT TEN, SIR! TEN OF PORT WHEEL ON, SIR!

CAREY WATCHED THROUGH THE SPRAY-LASHED GLASS OF HIS BRIDGE AS THE CORVETTE CAME ABREAST OF HIM.
OK
NOW, WHAT THE DEVIL DOES THAT SMART-ALEC WANT?

KEEPING A LEVEL PACE WITH THE PITCHING FREIGHTER, THE CORVETTE GRADUALLY INCHED IN CLOSER...
I HAPPEN TO KNOW THE CAPTAIN ABOARD THE DOMINIC, SIR. I'M AFRAID HE ONLY UNDERSTANDS PLAIN LANGUAGE!
I DON'T CARE HOW PLAIN THE LANGUAGE IS, CONNOR, AS LONG AS HE GETS BACK TO HIS STATION! WE'VE WASTED ENOUGH TIME ALREADY!

AS CAREY STEPPED OUT ON TO THE WING OF HIS BRIDGE, CONNOR'S VOICE BOOMED OUT ACROSS THE WATER
WHERE THE BLAZES DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, CAREY? THIS IS A CONVOY, NOT THE BOAT RACE! REDUCE SPEED AND GET BACK TO YOUR STATION!
CONNOR! I'D KNOW THAT VOICE ANYWHERE. IF HE THINKS HE CAN BOSS ME ABOUT JUST BECAUSE HE'S WEARING A TOFFEE-NOSED UNIFORM, THEN HE'S MISTAKEN!
DOMINI

GO TO THE DEVIL, CONNOR! I'M THE CAPTAIN OF THIS SHIP, NOT YOU! SHEER OFF WITH THAT PEA-SHOOTING BARGE OF YOURS AND LET US PROPER SAILORS GET ON WITH IT!
YOU'RE RIGHT, CONNOR, HE DOES NEED A LITTLE PLAIN SPEAKING TO... GIVE ME THAT MIKE!

THIS IS THE CAPTAIN! REDUCE YOUR SPEED BEFORE I PUT A SHOT ACROSS YOUR BOWS! THERE ARE U-BOATS IN THIS AREA! DROP BACK TO YOUR STATION... THAT'S AN ORDER!

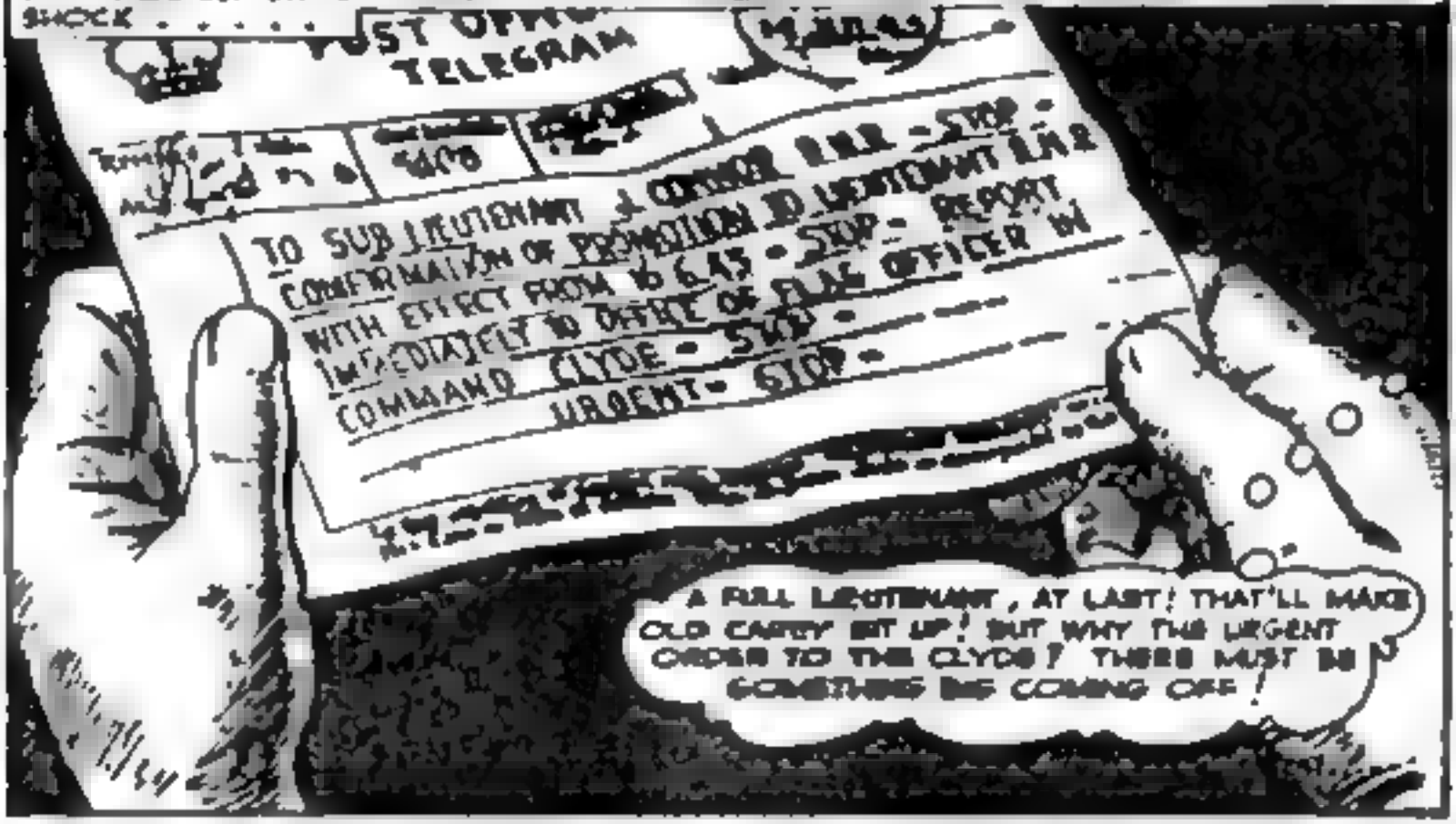
TURNING HIS BACK ON THE CORVETTE, CAREY SLAMMED THE BRIDGE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND GAVE THE ORDER TO REDUCE SPEED

WAY, THAT SCURVY DOG, CONNOR! SKULKING BEHIND THE SKIRTS OF HIS CAPTAIN! HE'LL PAY FOR THAT ONE, DAY ... BY JIMINY, HE WILL

THAT AFTER CONNOR AND CAREY LOST CONTACT AGAIN. IN MID-ATLANTIC, THE OUTWARD BOUND CONVOY MET A HOMEWARD BOUND CONVOY ESCORTED BY CANADIAN DESTROYERS. THE ESCORTS EXCHANGED THEIR CHARGES AND BOTH SET COURSE FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE HOMES.

BY THE MIDDLE OF 1943, THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC BEGAN TO SWING IN BRITAIN'S FAVOUR. BUT ON LAND, THE BATTLE FOR RUSSIA WAS REACHING ITS HEIGHT. CONNOR WAS ON LEAVE WHEN HE RECEIVED ORDERS TO MOVE . . . .

THE TELEGRAM BROUGHT WITH IT A WELL-EARNED PROMOTION — BUT IT ALSO CONTAINED A SHOCK . . . . .



CONNOR CAUGHT THE NIGHT TRAIN TO SCOTLAND. THERE WAS HARDLY TIME TO STOW HIS GEAR BEFORE HE WAS CALLED TO AN URGENT CONFERENCE WHERE HE FOUND HE WAS BUT ONE OF TWENTY OTHER OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE.

. . . EACH ONE OF YOU HAS BEEN CHOSEN BECAUSE OF YOUR NAVIGATIONAL EXPERIENCE. YOUR JOB WILL BE TO SAIL ABOARD MERCHANT SHIPS AS NAVIGATION OFFICERS ON A NORTHERN CONVOY!

HOLY SMOKE! THAT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING . . . RUSSIA!

THE JOB WOULD BE DANGEROUS, FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE SHIPS WERE CARRYING HIGH EXPLOSIVES. BUT THAT WAS NOT THE ONLY DANGER . . . .

WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT THE GERMAN POCKET-BATTLESHIP, *PRINZ GAMAHL*, IS HIDING IN NORTHERN WATERS —— YOU WILL HAVE A CONSTANT ESCORT . . . AND OUR NORTHERN BATTLE FLEET WILL NOT BE FAR FROM YOU AT ANY TIME.

LIEUTENANT CONNOR ? HERE
ARE TRAVELLING ABOARD THE
WHAT
OF FISH, I MUST SAY!
ALONG GET TO
RUSSIA !

Collision Course

AT THAT MOMENT, ABOARD THE DOMINIC, CAREY WAS RANTING ABOUT THE NAVY THAT CONSIDERED HIM INCAPABLE OF NAVIGATING HIS OWN SHIP . . . .

A PIP-SQUEAK NAVAL OFFICER FOR ADDITIONAL NAVIGATION DUTIES! SOMEBODY TELLING ME WHAT TO DO ABOARD ME OWN SHIP! WELL, I'LL TELL HIM WHERE TO GO THE MINUTE HE STEPS ABOARD!

AYE, SKIPPER!

THE WHALER BUMPED ALONGSIDE THE DOMINIC AND CONNOR STEPPED ABOARD . . .

OH NO! N-NOT YOU!

THAT'S RIGHT, MISTER MATE! LIEUTENANT JACK CONNOR REPORTING AS PER ADMIRALTY INSTRUCTIONS! KINDLY SHOW ME TO YOUR CAPTAIN, MY GOOD MAN!

BUT CONNOR NEEDED NO ANNOUNCING—HIS VOICE CARRIED TO CAREY'S CABIN, IN A FLASH, THE BURLY OLD SKIPPER SHOT OUT ON TO THE DECK.

CONNOR! OF ALL THE ROTTEN, VILE AND HORRIBLE THINGS TO HAPPEN TO A MAN! GET OFF THIS SHIP, YOU BILGE RAT, BEFORE I THROW YOU OFF!

NOW, NOW, CAPTAIN.... LET'S NOT BE HASTY! I DON'T LIKE BEING HERE ANY MORE THAN YOU LIKE HAVING ME! BUT ORDERS ARE ORDERS, DANNY BOY.

DESPITE HIS RAVINGS, CAREY REALISED THAT CONNOR WAS RIGHT. BUT HE WOULD SOONER DIE THAN LET CONNOR KNOW THAT HE AGREED WITH HIM.

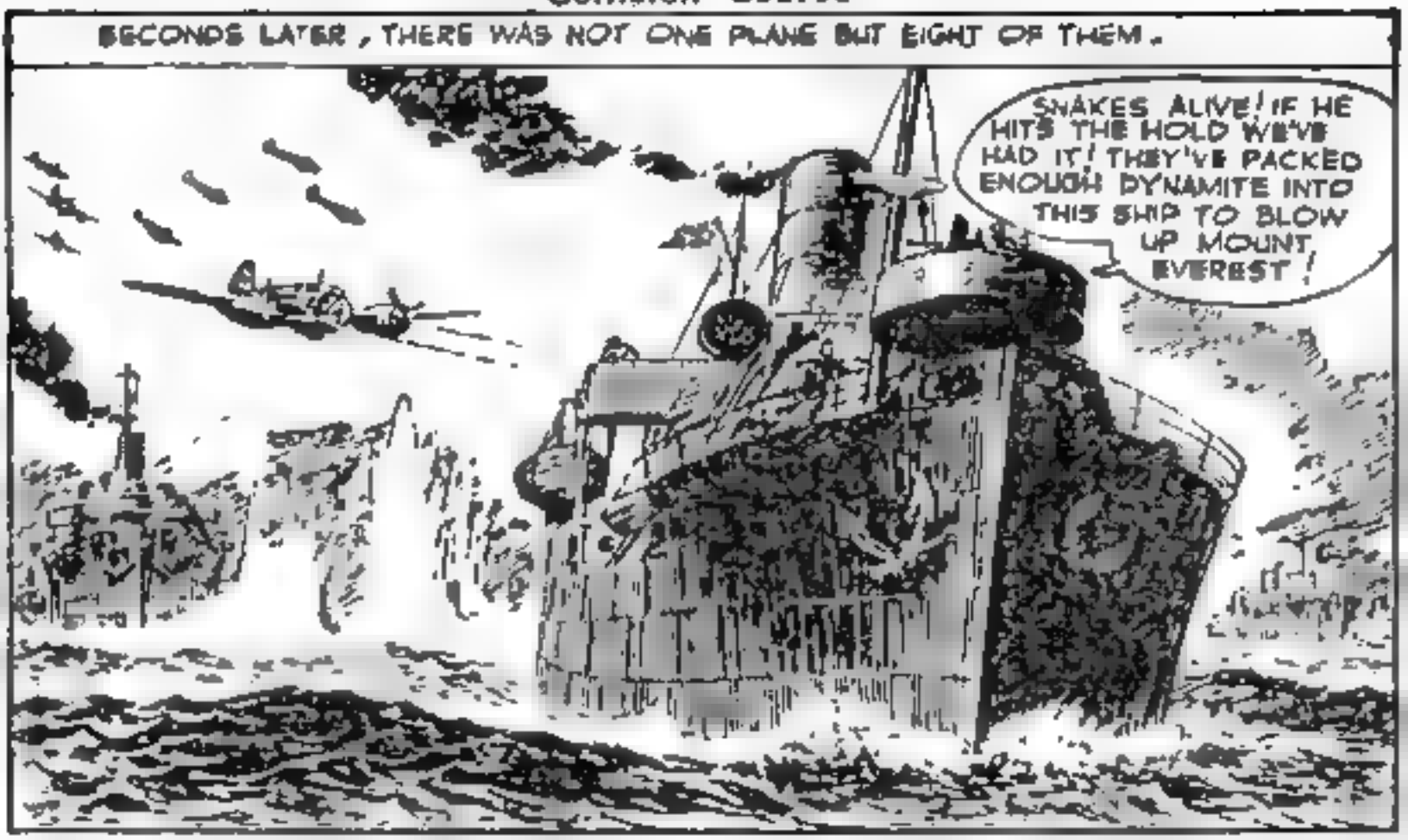
ORDERS, BY HEAVENS! THEY CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! I WARN YOU, MISTER CONNOR, IF YOU ARE TO REMAIN ABOARD THIS SHIP THEN STAY OUT OF MY WAY!

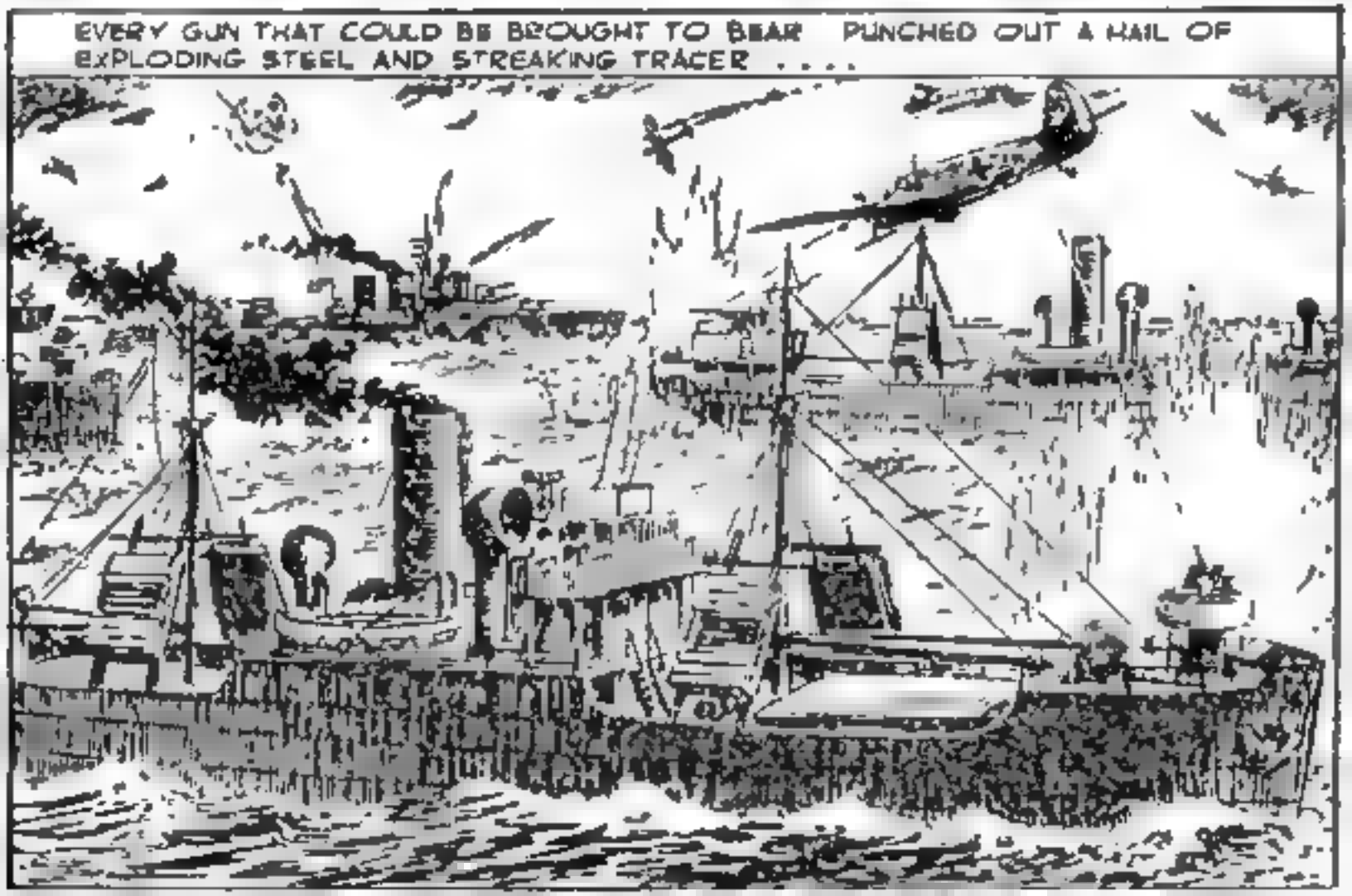
SPOKEN LIKE A MAN, DANNY BOY! I KNEW YOU'D GET TO LIKE ME EVENTUALLY

FOR THE EARLY PART OF THE VOYAGE, CONNOR STAYED QUIETLY AT THE BACK OF THE BRIDGE. HIS JOB WAS NOT TO INTERFERE BUT TO ADVISE SHOULD THE CONVOY BECOME SPLIT UP. TWO DAYS LATER....

PLANE OFF THE STARBOARD BOW, CAP'N

Collision Course





THE AIR ATTACK WAS BEATEN OFF AND IT SEEMED THAT THE CONVOY HAD COME THROUGH UNSCATHED. BUT THEN...
THE SHIP'S NOT ANSWERING TO THE HELM, CAP'N!
CURSE IT! WHAT'S HAPPENED NOW? MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL, CONNOR... RAKE OUT THAT ENGINEER AND FIND OUT WHAT'S WRONG!
I EXPECT THIS WRECK IS JUST DYING OF OLD AGE, THAT'S ALL!

BUT THE CHIEF ENGINEER HAD ALREADY BEEN AT WORK. HE MET CONNOR ON THE RUDDER LADDER...
THAT PERISHING JERRY PUT A CANNON SHELL RIGHT THROUGH ONE OF OUR STEERING CHAINS! IT CUT IT CLEAN IN HALF AND JAMMED THE RUDDER SOLID!
BLAZES! CAN YOU FIX IT?

ANXIOUS EYES TURNED TOWARD THE GRIMY FIGURE AT THE FOOT OF THE LADDER. IN HIS SKILLED HANDS, RESTED THE FATE OF THE BROKEN DOMINIC AND OF HER CREW.
WELL, CHIEF. CAN YOU?
I RECKON WE COULD POSSIBLY SHACKLE IT UP AGAIN. BUT IT WON'T BE DONE IN FIVE MINUTES, I CAN TELL YOU!
RIGHT CHIEF! DO WHAT YOU CAN. I'LL GET SPARKS TO RADIO THE ESCORT COMMANDER THAT WE'RE STOPPING FOR REPAIRS!

THE CONVOY PLOUGHED ON. ALL NIGHT THE DOMINIC WALLOWED ALONE ON A HEAVING SEA, THE ONLY SOUND BEING THE CLANGS WHICH SIGNALLED THE EFFORTS OF THE SWEATING MEN BELOW DECKS.
I KNEW THERE'D BE TROUBLE THE MINUTE YOU STEPPED ABOARD THIS SHIP, CONNOR! I DON'T GIVE MUCH FOR OUR CHANCES IF WE'RE STILL STOPPED AT DAYLIGHT!
DON'T YOU BLAME ME BECAUSE YOUR OLD TUB STOPPED A PACKET, CAREY! WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TROUBLE WITHOUT SCRAPPING AMONG OURSELVES! SO PIPE DOWN!
DISPLAYING ADMIRABLE RESTRAINT, CONNER AND CAREY SURVIVED THE NIGHT WITHOUT COMING TO BLOWS. BUT DAYLIGHT FOUND THE DOMINIC STILL AT REST.
HOW'S IT GOING DOWN THERE, CHIEF! IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF US MOVING YET? IF THOSE JERRY BOMBERS FIND US LIKE THIS WE'VE HAD IT!
LUMME! HAVE A HEART, SKIPPER! WE'VE BEEN FLOGGING IT ALL NIGHT! ANOTHER COUPLE OF HOURS SHOULD SEE IT FINISHED

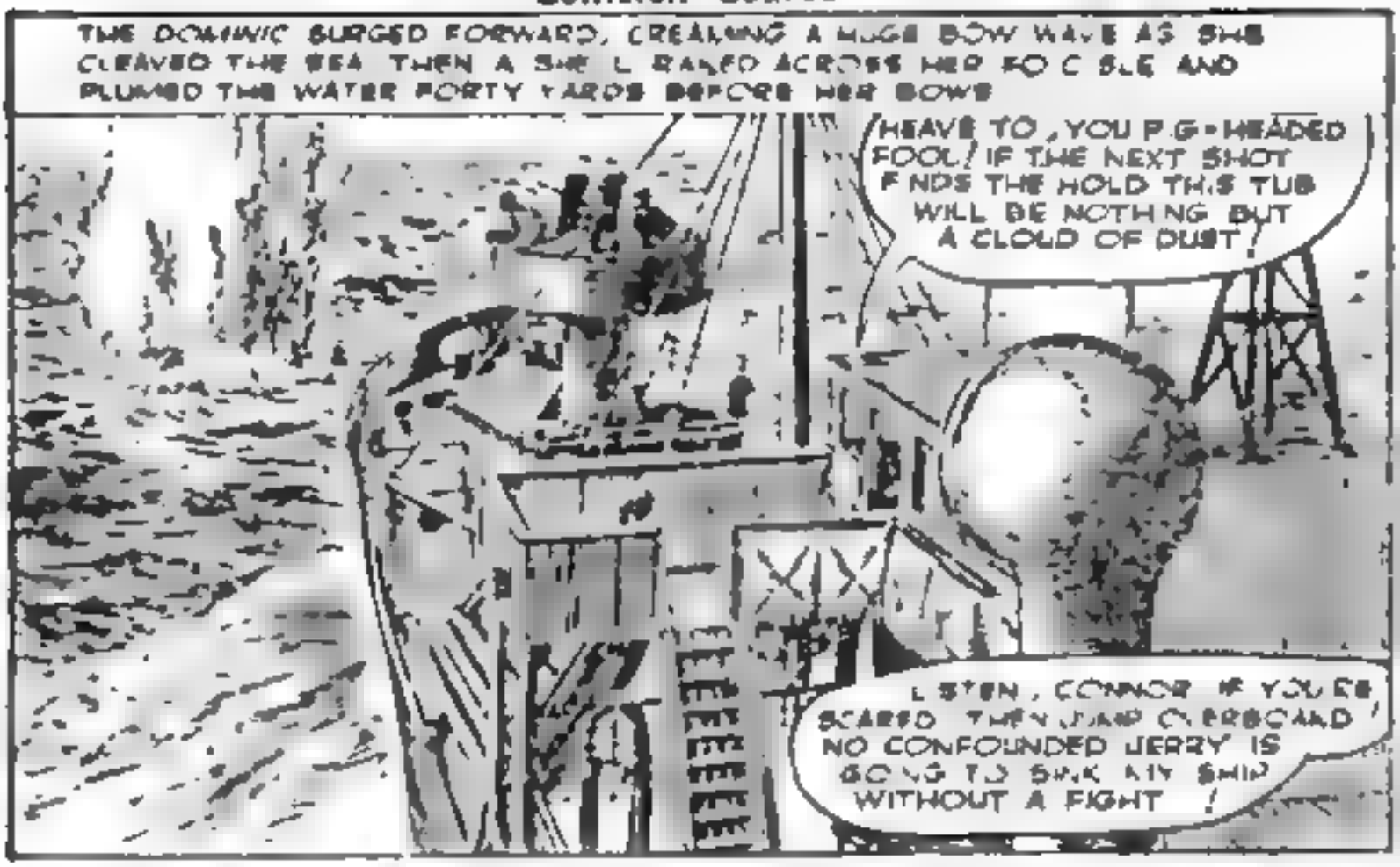
BUT WOULD TWO HOURS BE ENOUGH? AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE PRIDE OF THE GERMAN NAVY, THE POCKET-BATTLESHIP *PRINZ-GEMAHL*, WAS STEAMING AT NEARLY FORTY KNOTS IN THE WAKE OF THE RUSSIAN-BOUND CONVOY....

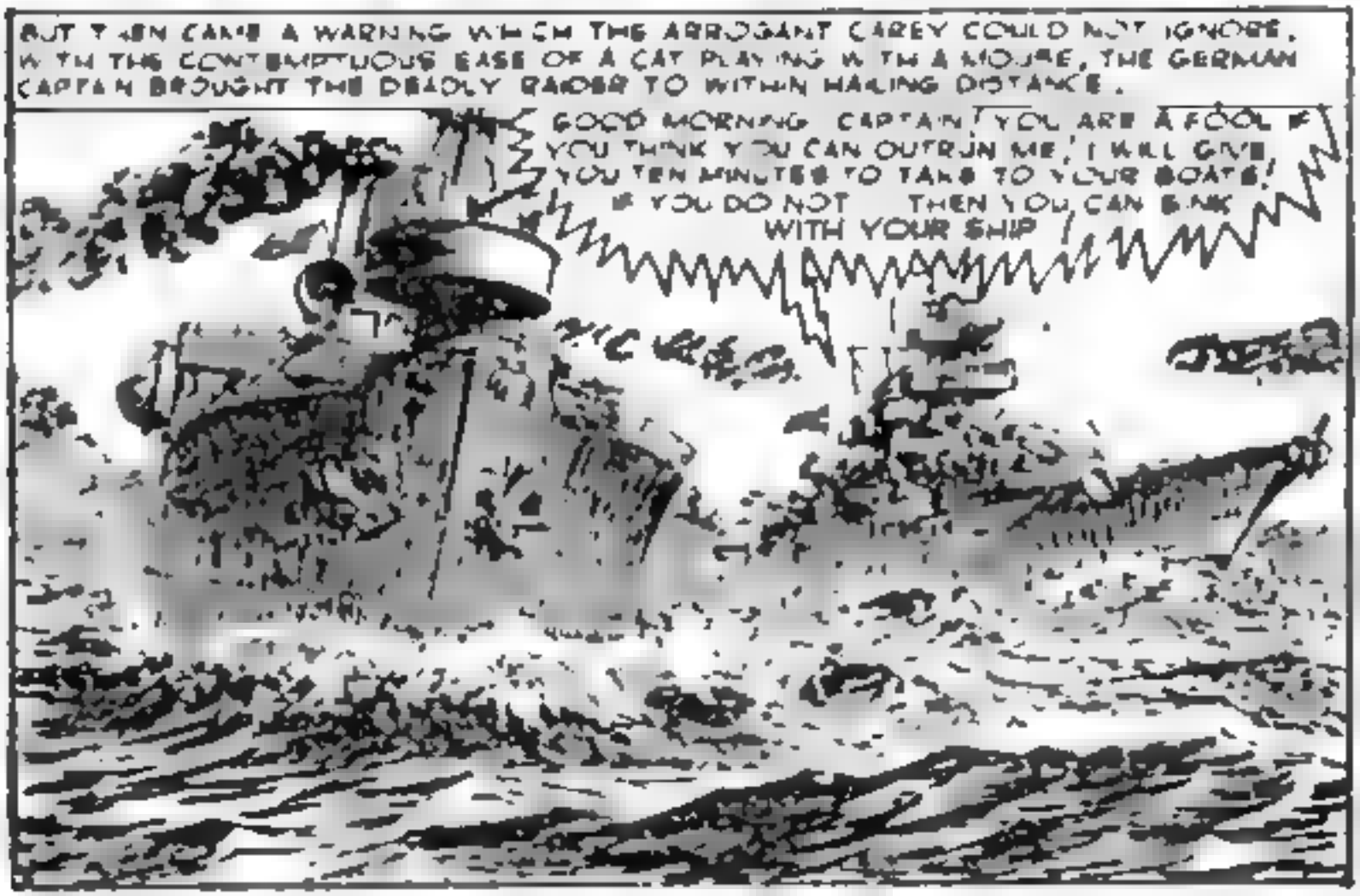
THERE IS A FIRM ECHO ON THE RADAR SCREEN, HERR KAPITÄN! IT COULD BE A SMALL SHIP... BUT IT IS STATIONARY!

AH.. PERHAPS IT IS A LAME DUCK FROM THE CONVOY! OUR BOMBERS REPORTED SOME HITS! WE WILL GO, AND INVESTIGATE!

LIKE A GIANT UNLEASHED GREYHOUND — FORTY THOUSAND COMPACT TONS OF THE FINEST LETHAL ENGINEERING WAR MACHINE TO COME OUT OF GERMANY, SPED TOWARDS THE DORMANT *DOMINIC II*.

AND AS THE ENGINEER ABOARD THE DUMINIC ANNOUNCED THE COMPLETION OF HIS NIGHT-LONG LABOURS . . .
SHE'S OKAY TO MOVE WHENEVER YOU'RE READY CAPIN!
SHIP ON THE PORT BOW, SKIPPER!
WHAT'S THAT?
CONNOR TRAINED HIS GLASSES ON THE GREY SHAPE GLIDING SMOOTHLY OVER THE HEAVING SEA TOWARDS THEM.
NOW WE'RE FOR IT! IT'S THE PRINZ-GEMAHL!
AND WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN..?
CONNOR'S USUALLY LIGHT HEARTED VOICE CARRIED MORE SINCERITY THAN CAREY HAD EVER HEARD BEFORE . . . .
IT MEANS CAREY, THAT THIS SHIP IS ABOUT TO BE SENT TO THE BOTTOM IN DOUBLE QUICK TIME. THE PRINZ GEMAHL IS JUST ABOUT THE FINEST BATTLE-WAGON AFLOAT TODAY!
I'LL SHOW 'EM WHO'S GOT THE FINEST SHIP AFLOAT, MISTER CONNOR! FULL AHEAD!


THE DOMINIC SURGED FORWARD, CREATING A HUGE BOW WAVE AS SHE CLEAVED THE SEA. THEN A SHELL RAKED ACROSS HER FO'C'SLE AND PLUMED THE WATER FORTY YARDS BEFORE HER BOWS
HEAVE TO, YOU P.G.-HEADED FOOL! IF THE NEXT SHOT FINDS THE HOLD THIS TUB WILL BE NOTHING BUT A CLOUD OF DUST!
LISTEN, CONNOR IF YOU'RE SCARED THEN JUMP OVERBOARD NO CONFOUNDED JERRY IS GOING TO SINK MY SHIP WITHOUT A FIGHT!


BUT THEN CAME A WARNING WHICH THE ARROGANT CAREY COULD NOT IGNORE. WITH THE CONTEMPTUOUS EASE OF A CAT PLAYING WITH A MOUSE, THE GERMAN CAPTAIN BROUGHT THE DEADLY RAIDER TO WITHIN HAILING DISTANCE.
GOOD MORNING CAPTAIN! YOU ARE A FOOL IF YOU THINK YOU CAN OUTRUN ME, I WILL GIVE YOU TEN MINUTES TO TAKE TO YOUR BOATS! IF YOU DO NOT THEN YOU CAN SINK WITH YOUR SHIP!

A STRIDENT CHORD OF FEAR STRUCK THROUGH THE CREW OF THE *DOMINIC* AS THE MOCKING VOICE CARRIED TO THEM ACROSS THE WATER. BUT THERE WAS NO PANIC. CALMLY, THEY WAITED UNTIL CAREY MADE HIS FATEFUL DECISION.

ALL RIGHT, LADS... GET THE BOATS AWAY! BUT I'LL GIVE THAT GERMAN BLOCKHEAD 'GOOD MORNING, CAPTAIN!' IT'LL BE A SORRY MORNING FOR HIM BEFORE I'M DONE!

WHAT FOOL TRICK ARE YOU PLANNING NOW, CAREY!

THE TOUGH OLD SEA DOG SNORTED CONTEMPTUOUSLY...

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'M GOING TO DO, CONNOR! THIS SHIP IS CARRYING ENOUGH FIREWORKS TO BLOW YON JERRY TO THE BACK OF BEYOND!

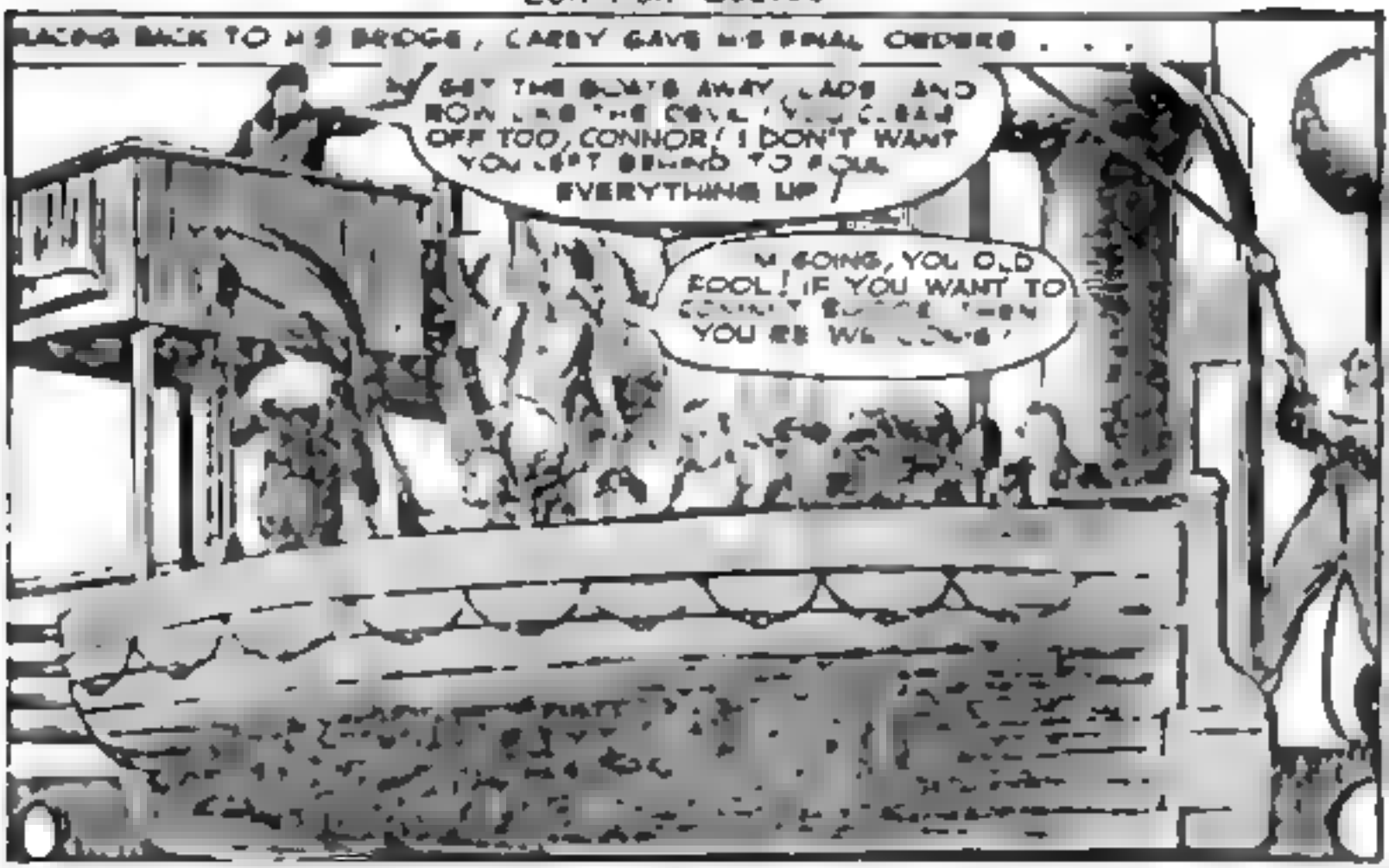
WHY, YOU MAD OLD COOT! SHE'LL BLOW YOU OUT OF THE WATER BEFORE YOU CAN MOVE A YARD!

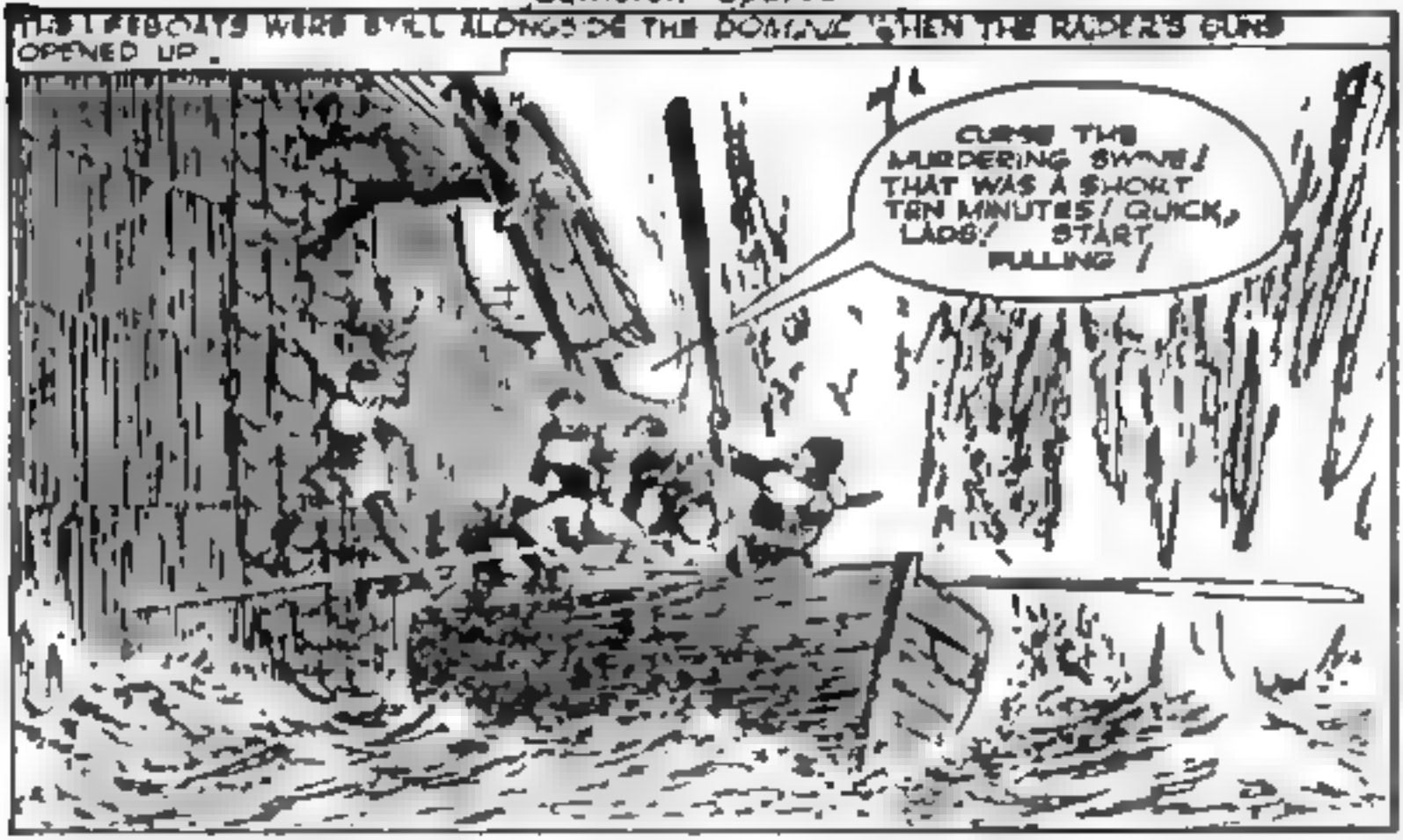
WITH A TURN OF THE WHEEL CAREY CHECKED THE DRIFT OF THE FREIGHTER AND HEADED HER BOWS ON TO THE RAIDER RIDING MAJESTICALLY BUT THREE-HUNDRED YARDS FROM HER...
WHAT IS HAPPENING OUT THERE! THE SHIP IS TURNING THIS WAY!
YOU'RE JUMPY, LEUTNANT! THE ENGLANDER CAPTAIN IS MANOEUVRING TO GET HIS BOATS AWAY!

BUT THE GERMAN CAPTAINS INTERPRETATION OF THE DOMINIC'S MOVEMENTS WERE WAY OFF BEAM.
SPARKS! GET A W/T SIGNAL OFF TO THE ESCORT COMMANDER! LET THEM HAVE OUR POSITION AND SAY... AM ENGAGING THE PRINZ GENAHL! THEN GET TO THE BOATS AS QUICK AS YOU CAN!
CUMME! I MEAN... AYE, AYE, SKIPPER!

BUT AS THE RADIO MESSAGE BEAMED OUT FROM THE DOMINIC TO THE CONVOY, OTHER EARS WERE LISTENING...
DER TEUFEL! GET THIS TO THE KAPITAN! QUICKLY!

Collision Course

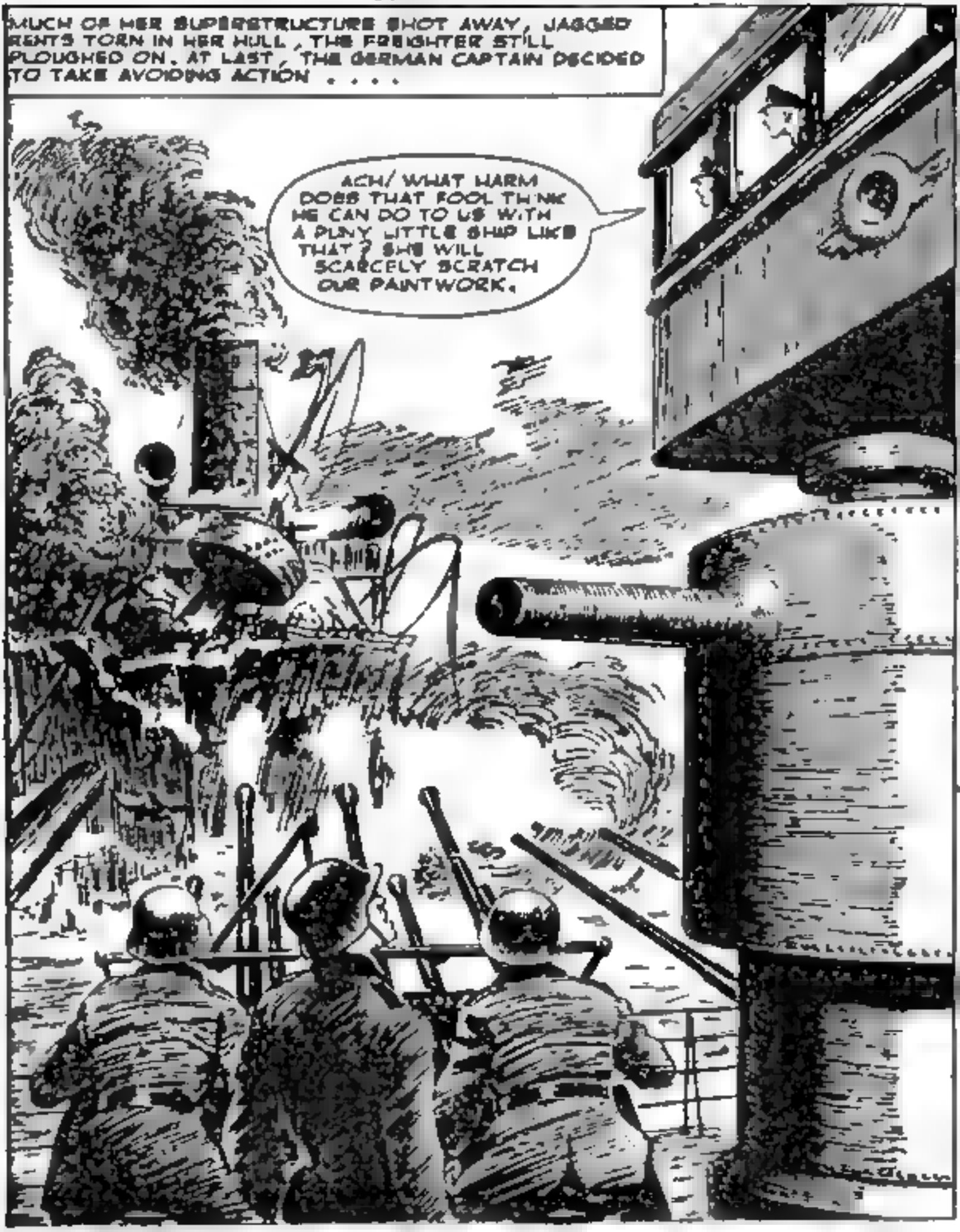


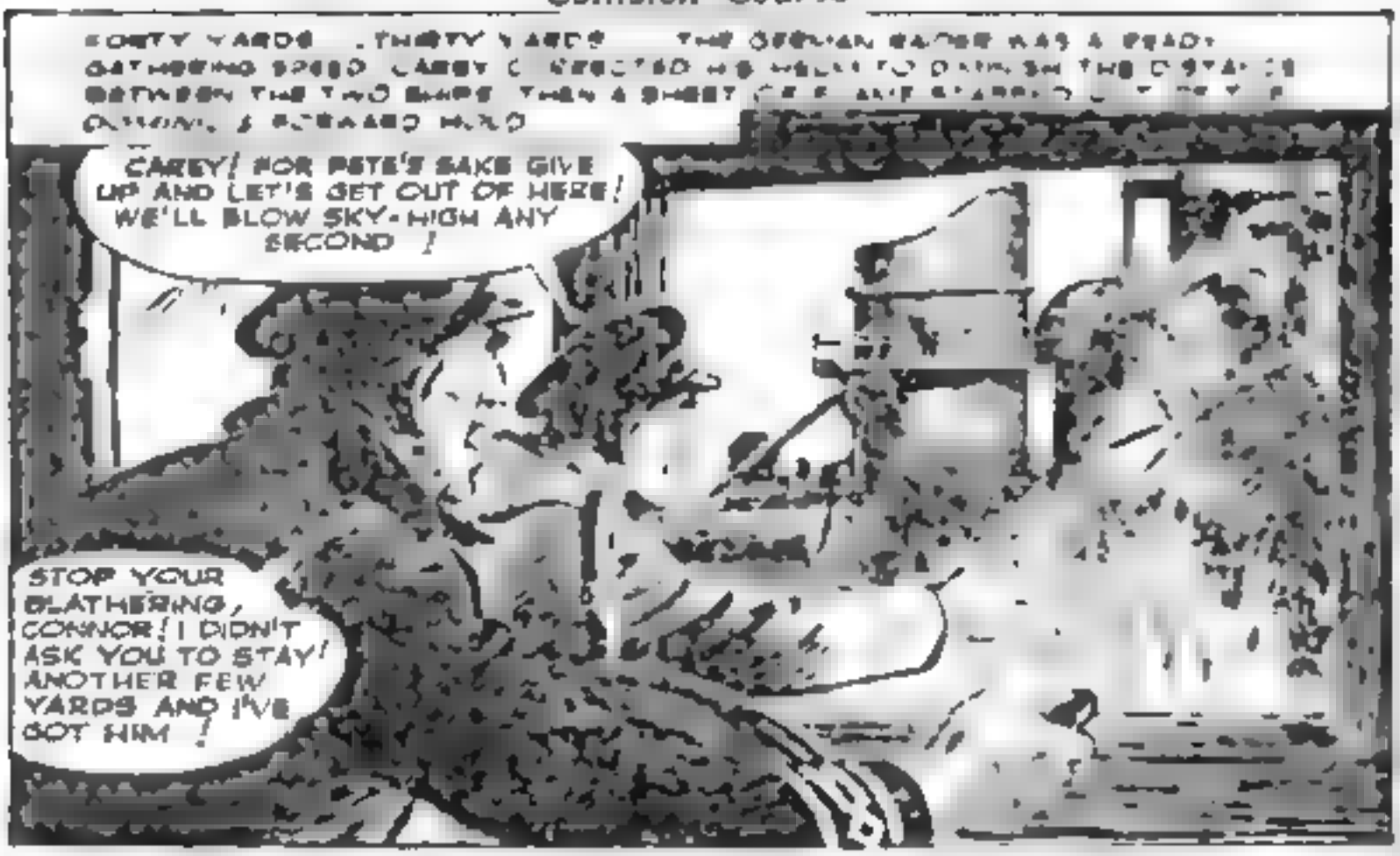

THE LIFEBOATS WERE BYELL ALONGSIDE THE DOMINIE WHEN THE RAIDER'S GUNS OPENED UP.
CURSE THE MURDERING SWINE! THAT WAS A SHORT TEN MINUTES! QUICK, LADS! START PULLING!

CAREY'S HAND JERKED THE TELEGRAPH TO FULL AHEAD. BUT HE WAS ALONE ABOARD H.M.S. SHIP.. AND ALL TOO LATE HE REALISED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RESPONSE FROM THE ENGINE ROOM.
HANG IT! CONNOR'S RIGHT... I'VE GOT NO SENSE! THERE'S NOBODY IN THE ENGINE ROOM!

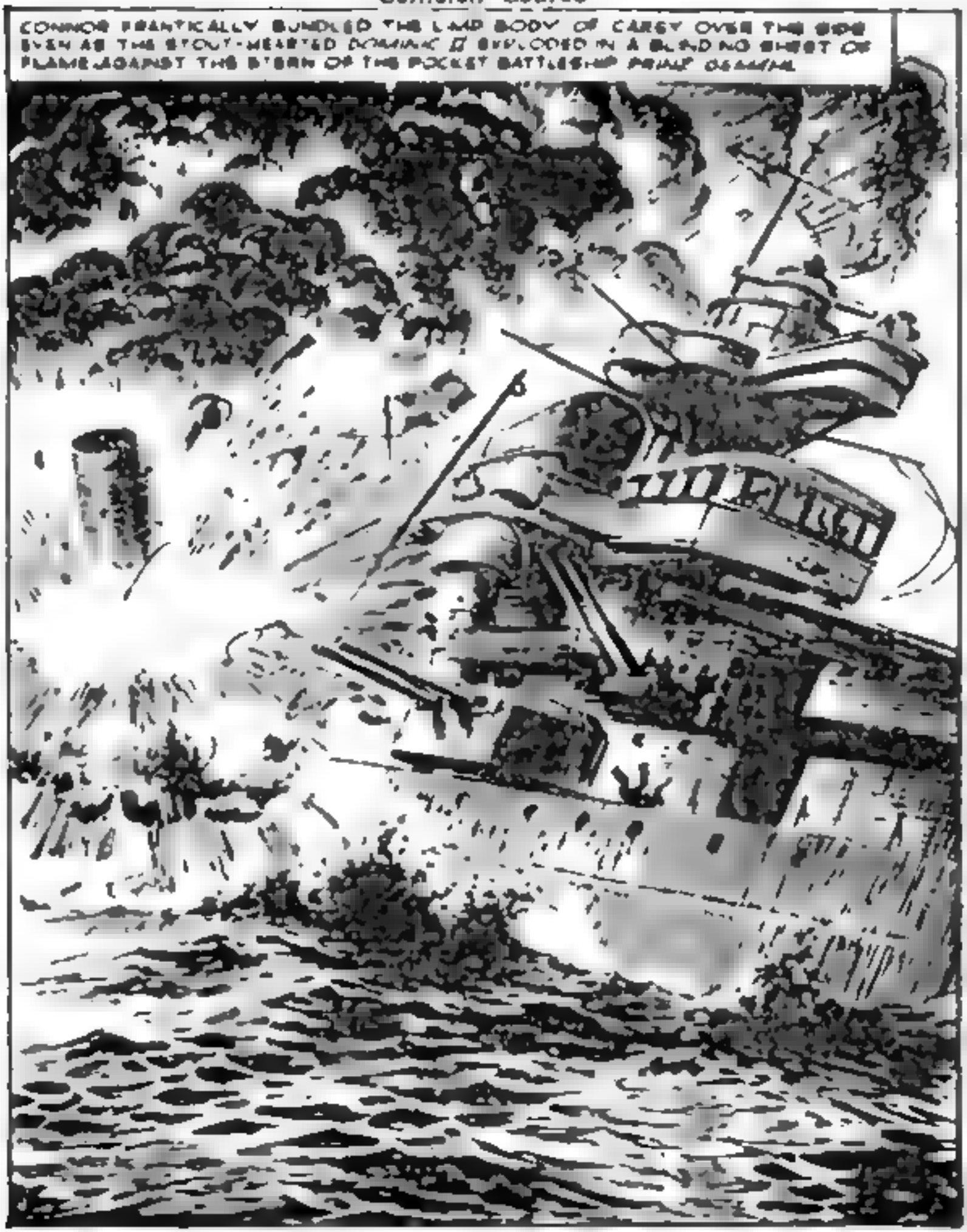
BUT AS HE STRODE ACROSS TO THE BRIDGE LADDER CAREY WAS SUDDENLY FLUNG OFF BALANCE AS THE ENGINES BELOW REVVED TO FULL POWER
WHO THE BLAZES..?

Collision Course


MUCH OF HER SUPERSTRUCTURE SHOT AWAY, JAGGED RENTS TORN IN HER HULL, THE FREIGHTER STILL PLOUGHED ON. AT LAST, THE GERMAN CAPTAIN DECIDED TO TAKE AVOIDING ACTION . . . .
ACH! WHAT HARM DOES THAT FOOL THINK HE CAN DO TO US WITH A PUNY LITTLE SHIP LIKE THAT? SHE WILL SCARCELY SCRATCH OUR PAINTWORK.


CAREY! FOR PETE'S SAKE GIVE UP AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! WE'LL BLOW SKY-HIGH ANY SECOND!
STOP YOUR BLATHERING, CONNOR! I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO STAY! ANOTHER FEW YARDS AND I'VE GOT HIM!

IF YOU WON'T SAIL TO SAFETY THEN I'LL HAVE TO DO IT FOR YOU STUBBORN OLD GOAT.


CONNOR FRANTICALLY BUNDLED THE LIMP BODY OF CASEY OVER THE SIDE EVEN AS THE STOUT-HEARTED DOMINIC II EXPLODED IN A BLIND NO SHOT OF FLAME AGAINST THE STERN OF THE POCKET BATTLESHIP PRINZ OSKAR

Collision Course

CONNOR BROKE SURFACE IN THE MIDST OF A CHAOTIC MASS OF DEBRIS MARKING THE SPOT WHERE TWO GREAT SHIPS HAD ENDED THEIR VOYAGING. STILL DAZED, HE STRUCK OUT TOWARDS CAREY WHOM HE HAD SNATCHED MOMENTARILY UNCONSCIOUS ON THE LITTERED SEA . .

HALF AN HOUR LATER CAREY RECOVERED HIS SENSES ABOARD A RAFT ON TO WHICH CONNOR HAD LIFTED HIM

OOOHH! MY HEAD! WHAT HAPPENED ?

TAKE IT EASY, DANNY BOY! THE EFFECTS OF THE EXPLOSION WILL CLEAR IN A MOMENT. WE'RE BOTH LUCKY TO HAVE COME OUT OF THAT LOT ALIVE!

SUDDENLY CAREY SHOOK HIS HEAD AND BLINKED. HE WAS LIKE A MAN COMING OUT OF A DREAM . . . AND A BAD DREAM AT THAT.

NOW I REMEMBER . . ? IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE EXPLOSION AT ALL — **IT WAS YOU** ! YOU HIT ME SMACK ON THE JAW! WHY, YOU SLIMY SEA SERPENT, I'LL BUST YOUR HEAD IN FOR THAT !

TIME AND PLACE MEANT NOTHING TO CAREY. HE HAD RAMMED A U-BOAT . . . HE HAD RAMMED A GERMAN POCKET-BATTLESHIP . . . AND NOW HE RAMMED HIS GREAT FIST INTO CONNOR'S FACE .

HOLD THAT!

Collision Course

WHEN THE ESCORT DESTROYERS EVENTUALLY RACED UP ON THE SCENE, THEY FOUND THE TWO MOST PECULIAR SURVIVORS THEY HAD EVER SEEN . . .

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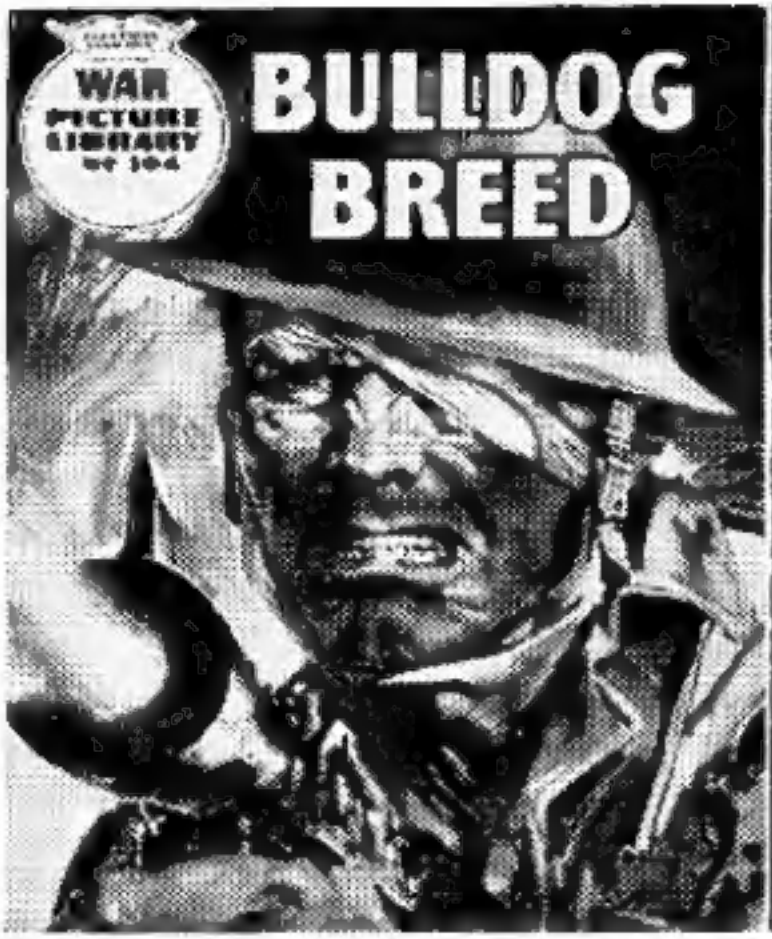

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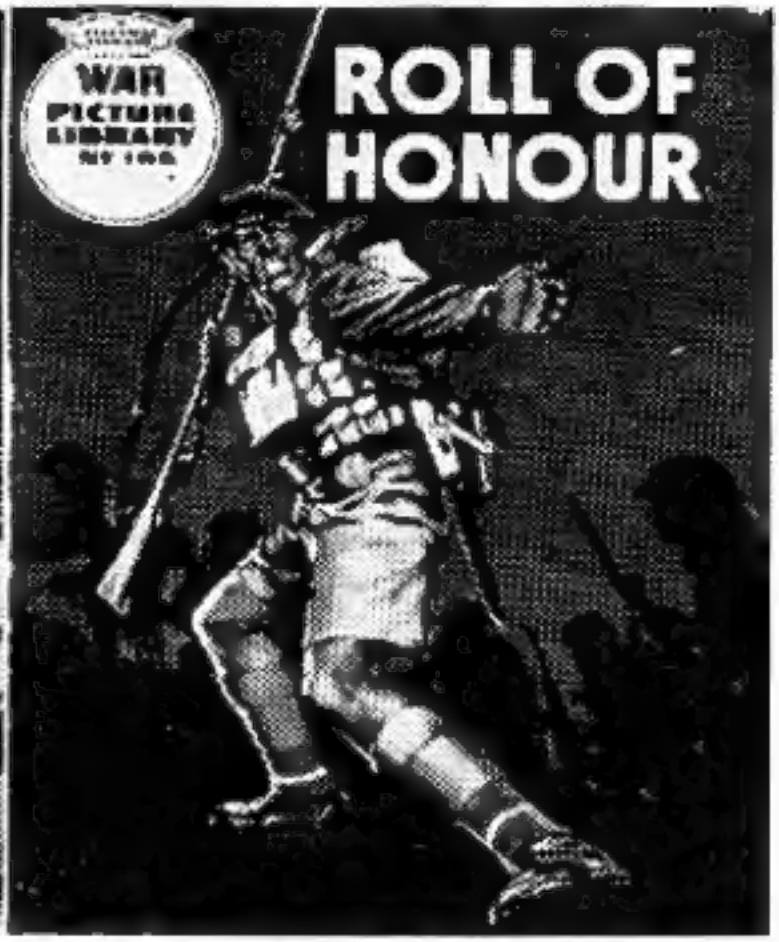

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